



## 'Racist,' 'con man': Cohen assails Trump before Congress

By MARY CLARE JALONICK,  
ERIC TUCKER and MICHAEL  
R. SISAK

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — In a damning depiction of Donald Trump, the president's former lawyer on Wednesday cast him as a racist and a con man who used his inner circle to cover up politically damaging allegations about sex, and lied throughout the 2016 election campaign about his business interests in Russia. Michael Cohen, who previously pleaded guilty to lying to Congress, told lawmakers that Trump had advance knowledge and embraced the news that emails damaging to Hillary Clinton would be released during the campaign. But he also said he had no "direct evidence" that Trump or his aides colluded with Russia to get him elected, the primary question of

special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation.

Cohen, shaking off incessant criticism from Republicans anxious to paint him as a felon and liar, became the first Trump insider to pull back the curtain on a version of the inner workings of Trump's political and business operations. He likened the president to a "mobster" who demanded blind loyalty from underlings and expected them to lie on his behalf to conceal information and protect him — even if it meant breaking the law.

"I am not protecting Mr. Trump anymore," Cohen declared.

His matter-of-fact testimony about secret payments and lies unfolded as Trump met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, offering stark TV counter-programming to the president's official duties. At a



Michael Cohen, President Donald Trump's former lawyer, testifies before the House Oversight and Reform Committee, on Capitol Hill, Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019, in Washington.

Associated Press

Vietnam hotel and unable to ignore the drama thousands of miles away, Trump

lashed out on Twitter, saying Cohen "did bad things unrelated to Trump" and "is

lying in order to reduce his prison time."

Continued on Page 3



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# Military spent about \$8M on transgender care since 2016

By JULIE WATSON and JENNIFER McDERMOTT

**SAN DIEGO (AP)** — Lindsey Muller served in the Army as a man for nearly a decade before telling her commanders in 2014 that she identified as a woman and would resign because military policy barred transgender personnel. Her superiors, citing her outstanding performance, persuaded the decorated attack helicopter pilot to stay. After then-President Barack Obama changed the policy, she started dressing in uniform as a woman. Muller went on to be recommended for a promotion as the surgery to complete her gender transition was scheduled, but the operation was postponed in 2017 when President Donald Trump announced on Twitter that he was reinstituting the ban.

With the ban now blocked by lawsuits, transgender troops Wednesday were set to testify for the first time before Congress.

In the nearly three years since the U.S. military welcomed transgender people into the armed forces, they have largely served without incident. Some, like Muller, have earned prestigious medals or received other forms of recognition. They say they stand as proof against President Donald Trump's argument that their presence is a burden.

"Once you meet transgender people who have served in the different branches ... it's really hard to dismiss the fact that



In this Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2019 photo released by the her office, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., left, gives challenge coins to U.S. Army Maj. Ian Brown, right, and other military service members to thank them for their service, in her office at the Capitol following the State of the Union address in Washington.

Associated Press

you will find Purple Heart recipients, Bronze Star winners, attack aviators, Navy SEALs," said Muller, who will not be testifying but is a plaintiff in one of four lawsuits challenging the ban. "We've been here, and we will continue to be here regardless. In what capacity is up to the administration." Trump has cited "tremendous medical costs" as a reason for the ban.

According to new data from the Defense Department provided to the House Armed Services Committee ahead of the hearing, the military has spent about \$8 million on transgender care since 2016. The military's annual health care budget tops \$50 billion. The Associated Press obtained the data Wednesday.

The hearing will be held by a subcommittee chaired by Democratic Rep. Jackie Speier who introduced bipartisan legislation in February that would prohibit the Department of Defense from denying the enlistment or continued service of transgender people if Trump's ban takes effect. Similar legislation was introduced in the Senate. It's unclear whether the legislation would be voted on as a stand-alone bill or be

folded into the defense bill, which could be harder for Trump to veto.

Among those set to testify will be five transgender troops and Pentagon officials including Vice Adm. Raquel Bono, the director of the Defense Health Agency, and James Stewart, acting under-secretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

They are expected to be questioned about whether there is evidence that supports excluding transgender personnel. The American Medical Association has stated there is none.

Muller, a 19-year Iraq combat veteran, diligently followed the Pentagon guidelines to transition. She was grounded after going on hormone replacement therapy, though non-transgender people on hormone replacement therapy routinely receive waivers to keep flying. Since then, Muller has been an aviation safety officer in South Korea, overseeing 1,100 troops near the demilitarized zone. Her commander recommended her for a promotion, calling her the best battalion officer in the brigade.

At the time, Muller was scheduling surgery to com-

plete her transition when Trump tweeted in 2017 that the Pentagon "cannot be burdened with the tremendous medical costs and disruption that transgender in the military would entail." She has since gotten the surgery and continues to serve.

While the Supreme Court in January lifted national injunctions by two courts, two others remain in place. Military chiefs testified before Congress last year that they found no problems with transgender troops on morale.

An estimated 14,700 troops on active duty and in the Reserves identify as transgender but not all seek treatment. The Defense Department treated 1,525 service members between July 1, 2016 and February 1, 2019, who were diagnosed with gender dysphoria, a condition of extreme distress from not identifying with one's biological gender. Currently about 1,071 are serving, including 20 senior officers. The military spent about \$8 million on transgender care, including about \$5.8 million on psychotherapy and about \$2 million on surgeries mostly for breast reductions and hysterectomies. There were

about 23,000 psychotherapy visits and about 160 surgeries. The administration's expected policy would allow transgender people to serve if they remain in their biological sex. It would grandfather in current service members, though the government has also said it retains the right to eliminate that protection.

Transgender troops say the ban mirrors the "don't ask, don't tell" policy that prohibited gay men and women from serving openly in the armed forces before Congress repealed it in 2010.

Army Lieutenant Gen. Tom Spoeher, who retired in 2016 when transgender troops started serving openly, witnessed no problems. But he agrees with Trump's policy because of suicide rates among people with gender dysphoria.

"The military has to work with the preponderance that the data and evidence say people with gender dysphoria are at much greater risk of harming themselves and not being at their best," said Spoeher, director of The Heritage Foundation's Center for National Defense.

U.S. Army Maj. Ian Brown, 38, disagrees that transgender troops have more problems than the general military population.

"At the end of the day, as a trans soldier, I'm going to do my job to the best of my ability, and that's to fight for everyone's freedoms," said the two-time Bronze Star recipient who transitioned from female to male while advising the Army's deputy chief of staff in operations and planning. "That's not going to change."

During Master Sgt. Erika Stoltz's first post-transition deployment, she received a humanitarian award for her hurricane relief work in the Caribbean.

"There have been people who have blatantly run into the face of certain death to save another soldier," said the combat veteran with two Bronze Stars. "They're not worried about what gender they are, they're just trying to save their buddy." □







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### COHEN

#### Continued from Front

In testimony that cut to the heart of federal investigations encircling the White House, Cohen said he arranged hush money payments to women on Trump's behalf and lied about them to the public and the first lady at the president's behest. He agreed to say Trump was "not knowledgeable" about the transactions even though the president directly reimbursed him, and said he was left with the unmistakable impression Trump wanted him to lie to Congress about a Moscow real estate project, even if the president never directly told him so. In one revelation, Cohen said prosecutors in New York were investigating conversations Trump or his advisers had with him after his office and hotel room was raided by the FBI last April. Cohen said he could not discuss that conversation, the last contact he said he has had with the president or anyone acting on his behalf, because it remains under investigation. The appearance marked the latest step in Cohen's evolution from legal fixer for the president — he once boasted he'd "take a bullet" for Trump — to a foe who has implicated him in federal campaign finance violations. The hearing proceeded along parallel tracks, with Democrats focusing on allegations against Trump while Republicans sought to undermine Cohen's credibility and the proceeding itself.

As Republicans blasted him as a convicted liar, a mostly unrattled Cohen sought to blunt the attacks by re-

peatedly acknowledging his own failings. He called himself a "fool," warned lawmakers of the perils of blind loyalty to a leader undeserving of it and pronounced himself ashamed of what he'd done to protect Trump.

"You make mistakes in life and I've owned them and I've taken responsibility for them, and I'm paying a huge price, as is my family," Cohen said during testimony that spanned roughly seven hours.

Cohen will soon report to prison for a three-year sentence. At the same time, he is seen as a vital witness for federal prosecutors because of his proximity to the president during key episodes under investigation and their decade-long professional relationship. The first of six Trump aides charged in the Trump-Russia investigation to testify publicly about crimes committed during the 2016 campaign and in the months that followed, Cohen also delivered biting personal commentary on a president he said never expected to win in the first place.

He recalled how Trump made him threaten schools he attended to not release his grades and SAT scores, mocked his own avoidance of the Vietnam War and denigrated blacks as "too stupid" to vote for him. "He never expected to win the primary. He never expected to win the general election," Cohen said. "The campaign - for him - was always a marketing opportunity."

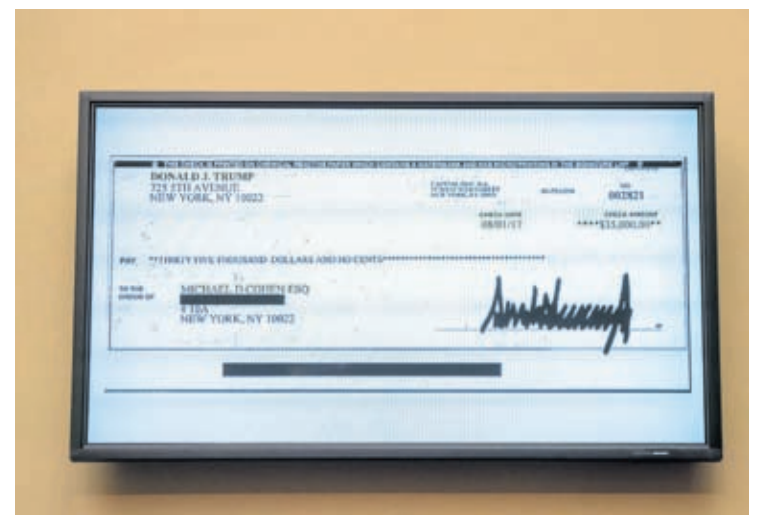
Cohen gave lawmakers his first-person account of how he arranged to buy the si-

lence of a porn actress and a Playboy model who said they had sex with Trump. He described a February 2017 conversation with Trump in the Oval Office in which the president reassured him that reimbursement checks sent through Federal Express were coming but would take some time to get through the White House system.

He said the president called him a year later to discuss the public messaging around the payments, and had even once put his wife, Melania, on the phone so that he could disavow knowledge.

"Lying to the first lady is one of my biggest regrets,"

Cohen said. "She is a kind, greatly, and she did not good person. I respect her deserve that." □



A copy of a check from Donald Trump to Michael Cohen, his former personal lawyer, is displayed as he testifies before the House Oversight and Reform Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019.

Associated Press

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In this Jan. 8, 2019, file photo Rep. Mike Thompson, D-Calif., pauses while speaking during a news conference to announce the introduction of bipartisan legislation to expand background checks for sales and transfers of firearms, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

By **MATTHEW DALY**

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Democratic-controlled House on Wednesday approved a measure requiring federal background checks for all firearms sales

and transfers, the first major gun control legislation considered by Congress in nearly 25 years.

Democrats called the 240-190 vote a major step to end the gun lobby's grip on Washington and begin

## House approves bill to expand gun-sale background checks

to address an epidemic of gun violence that kills thousands of Americans every year, including 17 people shot and killed at a Florida high school last year. The bill is the first of two the House is voting on this week as Democrats move to tighten gun laws following eight years of Republican control. The other bill would extend the review period for background checks from three to 10 days.

Both bills face dim prospects in the Republican-controlled Senate and veto threats from President Donald Trump, who said they would impose unreasonable requirements on gun owners.

Just eight Republicans joined 232 Democrats to support the bill, while only two Democrats voted against it.

The White House said in a veto message that the background-checks bill could block someone from borrowing a firearm for self-defense or allowing a neighbor to take care of a gun while traveling.

Democrats called those arguments misleading and said gun owners have a responsibility to ensure firearms are properly handled. The bill includes exceptions allowing temporary transfers to prevent imminent harm or for use at a target range.

The long-delayed bill would merely close loopholes to ensure that background checks are extended to private and online sales that often go undetected, Democrats said.

"People who are felons or are dangerously mentally ill shouldn't have guns," regardless of whether they buy them from a federally licensed dealer or their next-door neighbor, said Rep. Mike Thompson, D-Calif., a key sponsor who has pushed for expanded background checks since the 2012 killing of 20 elementary school students in Newtown, Connecticut.

"For six-and-a-half years, we had no cooperation from the past majority" in the House, Thompson said. "We couldn't get a hearing on the bill. We couldn't get a vote. Today, we're here to tell you it's a new day. With this (Democratic) majority, we have made a commitment to address the issue of gun violence."

While Republicans mostly

opposed the bill, the GOP scored a procedural victory when the House accepted a Republican amendment requiring that gun sellers notify Immigration and Customs Enforcement when an illegal immigrant tries to buy a gun. Twenty-six Democrats joined with Republicans to support the amendment, offered by Rep. Doug Collins, R-Ga.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi downplayed the GOP proposal, saying, "We won a big victory — get the message."

Pelosi, D-Calif., called the House vote "historic" and hailed the bill as "a long-overdue, commonsense action to end the epidemic of gun violence in America."

To demonstrate her support for the bill, Pelosi wore an orange dress while other Democrats wore orange ties or scarves, the color used by the movement against gun violence.

Rep. Madeleine Dean, D-Pa., said she hopes the symbolism will soon become obsolete.

"I long for the day when orange scarves are a fashion statement, not a cry for help," said Dean, who was wearing a bright orange scarf.

House Minority Whip Steve Scalise, R-La., who was gravely wounded in a 2017 shooting at a congressional baseball practice, said stricter background checks would not have prevented his shooting or other tragedies.

Democrats said the bill includes exceptions allowing temporary transfers for anyone who feels threatened by a domestic partner or other person. □

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## 3 people killed in train-vehicle collision on Long Island

WESTBURY, N.Y. (AP) — Two commuter trains traveling in opposite directions collided with a vehicle on the tracks in Westbury, killing all three occupants in the vehicle before one of the trains derailed and tore into a concrete platform Tuesday night, according to officials.

Nassau County Police Commissioner Patrick Ryder said the vehicle was "trying to beat the gate" when it was struck just before 7:30 p.m. He said one of the trains, which was carrying about 200 passengers and headed for Manhattan, was going at "full speed" when it crashed.

"The train then leaves the track and takes out the platform and the hits the north side of the platform and takes off about 30 yards of concrete, which goes through the train," Ryder said.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo called for a "full investigation into the collision," which also sent seven people on the trains to local hospitals with non-fatal injuries and forced the evacuation of nearly 1,000 passengers and crew on the two trains. Long Island Rail Road President Phillip Eng said the vehicle went around the grade crossing and was struck by the train that was leaving Westbury station. He said the gates at the crossing were properly functioning.

"The gates were down, the lights were flashing. We've confirmed that they were functioning," he said. "Witnesses have said the vehicle went around the gates, at which point the train that was leaving, heading eastbound, and the vehicle collided."

A westbound train traveling toward Westbury then struck the vehicle, he said. The vehicle was pushed and that's when the front two cars of the westbound train came off the rails, Eng said.

Local TV news helicopter video showed the train cars standing upright after the wreck, but with the forward cars off the rails. One end of one the trains struck



First responders work the scene of a collision involving a Manhattan-bound commuter train and a vehicle in Westbury, N.Y., Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019.

Associated Press

a station platform, crushing part of it. Many emergency vehicles were on the scene, including some ambulances. The doors of the train were open and firefighters and other emergency workers could be seen entering and moving through the cars. Service was suspended in both directions on the Ronkonkoma and Huntington/Port Jefferson branches.

Passenger Kiara Jackson told Newsday she heard the sound of metal dragging along the concrete platform.

"I knew something was wrong. We were in a panic," Jackson said. "There was a screech and then there was a thud. They told us to walk westerly and there were two small fires. Smoke was kind of coming in so they told us to just keep walking."

Another passenger, April Frazier, 31, of Brooklyn, was heading to Manhattan's Penn Station.

"I was sitting on the left side and all of a sudden the train really started rocking hard," Frazier told Newsday. "Flames flared up on my side. I heard the conductor yell 'Brake, brake!' That's when I saw the flames."

Tuesday night's crash was

the fifth incident at the crossing in the last 40 years, and the second involving a train hitting a vehicle, according to federal safety data. In the others, a person walking or standing on the tracks was hit by a train. As part of the LIRR expansion and modernization project, the railroad's "A Modern LI" website said it planned to eliminate the School Street grade crossing, saying it "poses a safety risk to drivers, pedestrians and LIRR customers," and replace it with a "two-way grade separated underpass."

After a spike in deaths at

railroad crossings in 2017, the U.S. Department of Transportation launched a public awareness campaign with the slogan "Stop! Trains Can't." The Federal Railroad Administration developed a crossing-finder app and persuaded technology companies to add grade-crossing warnings to GPS devices and mapping applications. In 2017, there were 2,115 grade-crossing crashes in the U.S., resulting in 271 deaths. That was the highest yearly grade-crossing death toll in a decade (2008 had 290).

Full-year data isn't available for 2018. □

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# Amid clouds of dust, border wall prototypes are demolished

**SAN DIEGO (AP)** — The government is demolishing eight prototypes of Donald Trump's prized border wall that instantly became powerful symbols of his presidency when they were built nine months after he took office.

The Trump administration says elements of the prototypes have been melded into current border fence designs and they have served their purpose.

The four concrete and four steel panels, spaced closely together steps from an existing barrier separating San Diego and Tijuana, Mexico, were one of Trump's top priorities, and he visited the location a year ago to see the installations firsthand.

For Trump's allies, the towering models were a show of his commitment to border security and fulfilling a core campaign promise. For detractors, they were monuments to wasted taxpayer dollars and a misguided display of aggression toward Mexico and immigrants seeking a new home in the United States.

Less than two hours after crews began Wednesday, seven of the barriers were destroyed. A large hydraulic jackhammer attached to an excavator pounded the walls repeatedly as slabs fell into small clouds of dust. An owl flew out of a steel tube on top of one model just as the jackhammer started to knock it down. A panel made of steel poles was also dismantled.

Public access to the prototypes was blocked from the San Diego side, turning an impoverished Tijuana neighborhood into a popular spot for journalists, demonstrators and curious observers. Artists displayed light shows on the walls with messages such as "Refugees Welcome Here" next to an image of the Statue of Liberty.

People climbed piles of trash against a short border fence that has since been replaced to get a clear view from Mexico. Some asylum-seekers hoisted their children over the



The top tube of a border wall prototype falls during demolition at the border between Tijuana, Mexico, and San Diego, Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019, in San Diego.

Associated Press

fence in front of construction crews to turn themselves in to agents.

Their removal makes way to extend a second layer of barrier with steel bollards, similar to slats, topped by a metal plate rising 30 feet (9.1 meters) from the ground, the same design being used elsewhere on the border. The new barrier vaguely resembles some of the steel prototypes but looks nothing like the solid concrete panels, which were widely panned because border agents can't see what's happening on the other side.

The nearly \$3 billion that Congress has provided for barriers during the first half of Trump's term requires that money be spent on designs that were in place before May 2017, effectively prohibiting the prototypes from being used and denying Trump bragging rights to say he built his wall. It's unclear if the restriction would apply to the billions of dollars that Trump wants to spend by declaring a national emergency on the nation's southern border.

The prototypes are coming down during the same week that the House voted to block Trump's emergency declaration.

The eight prototypes, which cost \$300,000 to \$500,000 each to build, vary by slopes, thickness and

curves. Bidding guidelines called from them to withstand at least an hour of punishment from a sledgehammer, pickaxe, torch, chisel or battery-operated tools and to prevent use of climbing aids such as grappling hooks.

The guidelines also required they be "aesthetically pleasing" from the U.S. side. One has two shades of blue with white trim. The others are gray, tan or brown — in sync with the desert.

The Department of Homeland Security redirected \$20 million from its budget in February 2017, a month after Trump took office, to pay for the prototypes and smaller mock-ups built farther from the border that have already been dismantled. The open bidding generated a wide range of ideas, some of them whimsical or far-fetched. One bidder wanted a wall large enough for a deck that would offer tourists scenic views of the desert.

Bidders met fierce criticism from wall opponents. The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Mexico said any Mexican companies who expressed interest were betraying their country.

The government rigorously tested the designs and, according to a summary from the Government Accountability Office, found that the concrete walls posed

"extensive" construction challenges and the others posed "substantial" or "moderate" challenges. Six of the eight would require extensive changes to accommodate drainage.

Border Patrol spokesman Ross Wilkin said testing also exposed several design flaws. A steel model with vertical U-shaped indentations could be jammed with small pieces of wood that could be climbed like a ladder. Prototypes with any exposed fasteners — like screws or bolts — could be broken with the right tools.

Wilkin noted that authorities never claimed the prototypes would be impenetrable and that they simply wanted to know how much time it took to crack each one.

The appeal to private industry for ideas was a new approach to building barriers and provided many lessons to guide construction, he said. That includes learning that certain materials were unsuitable for quick repairs and that combining different surfaces, like bollards topped by plates, were more effective.

The new barrier replaces a steel-mesh fence that runs more than 12 miles (19 kilometers) from the Pacific Ocean, which worked like a fortress when it was built a decade ago but is now

regularly breached with powerful battery-operated saws recently made available in home improvement stores. It will then extend another mile or so over the prototype site. SLSCO Ltd. of Galveston, Texas, won the \$101 million contract in December and started work last week.

Work on replacing the first-layer barrier, also with steel bollards and metal plates up to 30 feet high, runs the same length as the second layer and is nearly finished. The previous first-layer barrier was a short fence.

The prototypes and new construction continue a long presence of border activity in the adjoining Tijuana neighborhood, initially occupied by squatters who later bought the land. Guillermina Fernandez, who sells plants out of her home and at a public market, said smugglers once brought large groups of migrants and dug small holes under the old fence.

About 15 years ago, Fernandez, 54, briefly turned her patio into a dining area for migrants. Campfires kept people warm while waiting for an opening to dart past Border Patrol agents.

"It looked like a party here," she said.

Illegal crossings in San Diego have fallen dramatically since barriers were installed in the 1990s and mid-2000s, but some migrants go around them and others go over them.

Residents complain that outsiders illegally dump trash on their dirt roads that lack street lights. They say the new wall has produced one benefit: The bollards allow the Border Patrol's bright lights to seep in and provide some visibility at night. □

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## Floods isolate two California towns, storm dumps snow in West

By HAVEN DALEY and OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ

Associated Press

GUERNEVILLE, Calif. (AP) —

Two communities in Northern California's wine country were accessible only by boat Wednesday after a rain-swollen river overflowed its banks following a relentless downpour across an already waterlogged region.

The small city of Guerneville north of San Francisco "is officially an island," with the overflowing Russian River forecast to hit its highest level in about 25 years, the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office said in a statement. "Nobody is coming or going from the Guerneville area at this time," said sheriff's Sgt. Spencer Crum. The nearby town of Monte Rio was also isolated by floodwaters and all roads leading to it were swamped.

The still rising Russian River was engorged by days of rain from western U.S. storms that have also dumped heavy snow in the Sierra Nevada, throughout the Pacific Northwest and into Montana, where Gov. Steve Bullock signed an emergency order to help keep up the supply of heating fuel amid frigid temperatures.

Snow from the storms closed roads and schools and toppled trucks and trees from Oregon to Montana and an avalanche in the Sierra prompted Amtrak to suspend rail service between Sacramento and Reno, Nevada.

The Russian River topped 42 feet (13 meters) Wednesday afternoon, when television helicopter footage showed homes underwater and cars submerged. It could crest at more than 46 feet (14 meters) by Wednesday night, officials said. About 4,000 residents in two dozen river communities were ordered to evacuate Tuesday evening but officials estimate only about half heeded the orders, Crum said.

Jeff Bridges, co-owner of the R3 Hotel in Guerneville, said he and others who stayed behind were well prepared to ride out the storm. He and employees spent most of the night moving computers, business records and furniture to second-floor room. Reached by telephone, Bridges said there was about 7 feet (2 meters) of water at his two-story home in Guerneville Wednesday but was not worried.

"As long as everybody is safe, dry and warm, it's all fine. You just ride it out," said Bridges, noting that this flood was the fourth he's experienced in 33 years. He added: "People in Florida have hurricanes, people in Maine have blizzards; we have floods," he said. "It's the price we have to pay to live in paradise."

Several areas in California set record-high rainfall totals, including nearby Santa Rosa, which had nearly 8 inches (20 centimeters) of rain in one day. The often-waterlogged Venado



Rising flood water makes its way onto River Road Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019, in Forestville, Calif. Rising flood water makes its way onto River Road Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019, in Forestville, Calif.

Associated Press

weather station 5 miles (8 kilometers) from Guerneville recorded more than 20 inches (50 centimeters) of rain in 48 hours.

In the Sierra Nevada, which has already seen a month of heavy snow, two Amtrak trains together carrying nearly 300 passengers stopped and reversed directions because of an avalanche that closed railroad tracks. Service on Amtrak's California Zephyr between Reno and Sacramento, California, has been suspended until weather conditions improve, Amtrak spokeswoman Kimberly Woods said.

California officials were also concerned about potential mudslides in saturated wine country hillsides and in areas scarred by wildfires in

2017.

A mudslide Tuesday near Monte Rio trapped a man and a woman before they were rescued, messy but unharmed.

"I fell into the mud when the tree fell over the top of me. It happened so fast you don't even know," Kear Koch told KGO-TV.

Elsewhere in the area, several people had to be rescued from cars stranded while motorists tried to drive through flooded roads. Nina Sheehan, who is visiting from North Carolina, had to abandon her rental SUV after it got stuck in a flooded hotel parking lot.

"We made a decision to take the rental car through the waist-high water and we got two thirds of the way and then the car stalled,"

she said. "Do not try to go through any water over a foot high because you never know what you're going to find."

Firefighters in Monte Rio worked through the night pulling people out of cars stuck in flooded roadways and getting people out of their homes as water approached, Fire Chief Steve Baxman told the Press-Democrat newspaper of Santa Rosa.

"We took 17 people out of cars and houses during the night. Too many people are driving into water," he said. Other waterways, including the Napa River, also were expected to overflow their banks as an ocean-spanning plume of moisture continued tracking through the West. □



# Canada ex-attorney: Government tried to interfere in case

By **ROB GILLIES**

**Associated Press**

**TORONTO (AP)** — Canada's former attorney general testified Wednesday she experienced a consistent and sustained effort by many people in Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government to inappropriately interfere in the prosecution of a major Canadian engineering company and said it included "veiled threats." Ex-justice minister and ex-attorney general Jody Wilson-Raybould said Wednesday that 11 people tried to interfere in her prosecutorial discretion and said in a meeting with Trudeau, the prime minister raised the issue and asked her to "help out" with the case. Wilson-Raybould said she asked Trudeau if he was politically interfering with her role as attorney general and told him she would strongly advise against it.

"No, no, no. We just need a find a solution," she said



Cameras follow Jody Wilson-Raybould as she waits to appear in front of the Justice committee in Ottawa, Wednesday February 27, 2019.

**Associated Press**

Trudeau responded.

She said Trudeau told her that if Montreal-based SNC-Lavalin didn't get a deferred prosecution there would be jobs lost and it would move its headquarters from Montreal to London. Wilson-Raybould said

she was "barraged" and subjected to "hounding" by members of the government.

Trudeau's government has been on the defensive since the Globe and Mail newspaper reported Feb. 7 that Trudeau or his staff

pressured her to try to avoid a criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin over allegations of corruption involving government contracts in Libya. Critics say that would be improper political meddling in a legal case.

"For a period of approxi-

mately four months, between September and December of 2018, I experienced a consistent and sustained effort by many people within the government to seek to politically interfere in the exercise of prosecutorial discretion in my role as the attorney general of Canada," she told a Parliament justice committee.

The scandal has been a significant blow to Trudeau, who is facing an election this year.

Gerald Butts, Trudeau's closet adviser, resigned last week but denied that he or anyone else pressured Wilson-Raybould. Michael Wernick, the top civil servant in the government, has also said that no inappropriate pressure was put on Wilson-Raybould and that Trudeau repeatedly assured Wilson-Raybould the decision on the SNC-Lavalin prosecution was hers alone. □

# Business chief says delaying Brexit helps provide 'sanity'

By **JILL LAWLESS**

**Associated Press**

**LONDON (AP)** — Prime Minister Theresa May insisted Wednesday that Britain will leave the European Union on schedule next month, while the head of a major business organization said May's grudging decision to allow lawmakers to vote to delay Brexit provides an "option on sanity."

May has bowed to pressure from within her own Conservative government and given Parliament the chance to delay Britain's scheduled March 29 departure if lawmakers fail to approve her divorce agreement with the bloc.

May stressed that she personally opposes extending the Brexit deadline, and said "the United Kingdom remains on course to leave the European Union with a deal" if lawmakers "hold their nerve." Writing in the Daily Mail, May said talks with the EU about securing changes to the divorce deal to make it more palatable to Parliament have



A Demonstrator protests at the entrance of the Houses of Parliament in London, Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019.

**Associated Press**

"begun to bear fruit."

The House of Commons rejected May's deal with the EU last month — largely over concerns about a provision to guarantee an open border between the U.K.'s Northern Ireland and

EU member Ireland — and sent May back to Brussels to get changes.

The EU is adamant that the legally binding withdrawal agreement can't be changed, though the bloc's negotiators are hold-

ing talks with U.K. Attorney General Geoffrey Cox about potential tweaks or additions around the margins. On Tuesday, May gave Parliament a greater say over Brexit to forestall a rebellion by pro-EU mem-

bers of her government, who threatened to quit and vote with the opposition in order to rule out a disruptive "no-deal" Brexit.

She said Parliament will get to vote again on the deal by March 12. If it is rejected, lawmakers will then vote on whether to leave the EU without an agreement or seek to postpone Brexit by up to three months.

The move angered pro-Brexit lawmakers, who fear any postponement could be a step toward stopping Britain's departure.

It was welcomed, however, by pro-EU members of Britain's divided Parliament. They will try to impose more conditions on the government's Brexit negotiating strategy in a series of votes on Wednesday evening.

British businesses also welcomed the prospect of a delay. They warn that without a deal, Britain risks a chaotic departure that could disrupt trade between the U.K. and the EU, its biggest trading partner. □





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# EU warns Italy to slash rampant public debt

By LORNE COOK

**BRUSSELS (AP)** — The European Union expressed concern about Italy's debt levels Wednesday and warned the government in Rome to push through measures to shore up the public finances.

In a review of Italy's economic performance — one of the 28-nation bloc's biggest economies — the European Commission said Rome faces "quite considerable challenges" due to high debt, slow growth and high unemployment.

"The lack of progress in addressing these challenges unfortunately leads us to conclude that Italy's macroeconomic imbalances remain excessive," Economy Commissioner Pierre Moscovici told reporters.



European Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs Pierre Moscovici talks to journalists at the European Commission headquarters in Brussels, Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019.

Associated Press

He said Rome "must take steps to improve the quality of its public finances, increase the efficiency of its public administration, and also of (its) justice system, enhance its business environment, and strengthen its labor market as well as the

financial system."

"The urgency of doing so is all the greater given Italy's weakening economic outlook," Moscovici added. Italy's debt burden — how much it owes — is the second-highest in Europe, after Greece, relative to the

size of its economy.

Italy expects its debt-to-GDP ratio to rise to 131.7 percent, but the EU's executive body warned it might be higher "due to the weak macroeconomic outlook, underachievement of privatization targets and a worsening primary balance."

"It is critical that debt doesn't start growing again," Moscovici said.

As with the case of Greece in the first half of this decade, many are concerned about potential financial turmoil in Europe should Italy lose control of spending. Saving Greece was hard enough; bailing out Rome would be all but impossible.

It's the second budget warning shot fired from

Brussels in three months, and comes at a time of heightened tensions — the populist Italian government has vowed to defy any orders coming from what it considers to be an unelected commission of bureaucrats.

In December, the commission forced Italy to submit a new budget plan after it assessed that the previous draft would break rules governing use of the euro single currency. However, it noted that even the revised plan was "not ideal." The direction of Italy's debt will depend hugely on how the Italian economy performs — more growth should lead to more tax receipts.

And here there is a divergence of opinion. □

# Romania prosecutor backed for new EU job amid govt criticism

By ALISON MUTLER

**BUCHAREST, Romania (AP)** — A Romanian prosecutor has won backing from two European Union committees to head a new prosecutor's office fighting fraud, despite fierce opposition from her own government. The European Parliament's Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee on Wednesday gave the most votes to Laura Codruta Kovesi, placing her above a French candidate and a German one. On Tuesday, the parliament's Budgetary Control Committee also selected Kovesi as the top candidate. The European Public Pros-

ecutor's Office is due to become operational at the end of 2020 and will investigate fraud involving EU funds, and money laundering. The final appointment will be made after negotiations between the European Parliament and the European Council.

Kovesi successfully prosecuted hundreds of officials including ministers, mayors and state company directors during her five-year tenure as chief prosecutor of the National Anti-Corruption Directorate. But she drew the ire of the Romanian government, which is itself under criticism for a judicial overhaul critics say

will make it harder to prosecute top officials for graft. Justice Minister Tudorel Toader recently wrote to EU justice ministers accusing her of signing "anti-democratic pacts" with Romania's intelligence agency in corruption and national security probes.

But political commentator Cristian Tudor Popescu said the government campaign to stop her backfired as it was perceived as "attacks against European" institutions and values.

Popescu said Kovesi was considered suitable for the post because "she has the experience of fighting under pressure, in very difficult



In this Jan. 31, 2017 file photo, Romanian chief anti-corruption prosecutor Laura Codruta Kovesi speaks during an interview with The Associated Press in Bucharest, Romania.

Associated Press

conditions, at a high level." She was removed from her post last year by the justice

minister, who cited mismanagement and asserted she overstepped her authority.



# Egypt says fight between conductors led to crash killing 25

By MAGGIE MICHAEL

Associated Press

**CAIRO (AP)** — A fight between two train conductors unleashed a speeding, unmanned locomotive that slammed into a barrier and exploded in the Egyptian capital's main train station Wednesday, killing at least 25 people, authorities said. Railway officials said the single railcar collided head-on with the buffer stop, causing a huge explosion and fire. At least 47 people were also injured, many of them critically, and officials said the death toll could rise.

The deadly blaze blasted through people on the platform in the busy Ramses Station in downtown Cairo. A surveillance video showed the moment of impact when the car barreled past men and women walking by and engulfed them in flames and smoke. Charred bodies lay on the platform, and a man in flames ran down a staircase in panic, according to other photos and videos posted on social media.

Egypt's Prosecutor General Nabil Sadek said investigators determined the locomotive's conductor had left



People look at a damaged train inside Ramsis train station in Cairo, Egypt, Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019.

Associated Press

his car to fight with another conductor whose railcar was blocking his.

But the conductor left without putting on the brakes and the other car began moving backward, freeing the locomotive, which then gathered speed and hit the concrete-and-metal barrier, exploding.

"The driver left the railcar without taking any measures to brake it," Sadek

said in a statement.

Sadek put the death toll at 20 while health officials said at least 25 people were killed and dozens more were injured in the crash and ensuing fire. Some of the bodies were burnt beyond recognition and DNA tests were carried out to determine identities.

The driver of the railcar has been under interrogation and Sadek said the investi-

gation was continuing.

The deadly accident prompted Transportation Minister Hisham Arafat to resign his post, according to a statement released by the Cabinet office.

The Ramses district is among the busiest and most crowded areas of Cairo. The state railway agency briefly halted all train traffic and ordered the evacuation of the station. The

accident triggered an on-line debate among many Egyptians, with many blaming the government for not improving railway services in Egypt, even after a series of deadly accidents. Several noted previous statements by President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi arguing about spending billions of pounds on improving trains. Video from surveillance cameras showed flames ravaging the station's interior. One video that surfaced on social media showed men and women carrying bags and personal belongings and walking on the rail platforms as the train car crashes and explodes.

Another showed men and women running and searching for exits after the explosion. A man is seen running back and forth, his shirt on fire, until another man rushes to pour water on him.

Mohammed Said, head of the Cairo Railroad hospital, said at least 25 were killed but that the death toll could rise. Many of the wounded were in critical condition, mostly suffering severe burns, said Egyptian Health Minister Hala Zayed. □

# Israeli PM vows to bar Iran from securing presence in Syria



Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, gestures while speaking to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during their meeting in the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019.

Associated Press

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV  
Associated Press

**MOSCOW (AP)** — Israel's prime minister vowed Wednesday to prevent Iran from securing a lasting presence in Syria as he vis-

ited Moscow for talks focusing on regional security.

For Benjamin Netanyahu, it's the first trip to Moscow since September's downing of a Russian warplane by Syrian forces that were

responding to an Israeli air strike. The incident left 15 Russian crew dead and threatened to derail close security ties between Russia and Israel.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said at the start of Wednesday's talks that "it's very important to discuss the situation in the region and security issues."

He added that the high-level consultations are essential in view of the evolving situation.

Netanyahu began the talks by reaffirming Israel's strong determination to block attempts by Iran to establish a foothold in Syria.

"The greatest threat to stability and security in the region comes from Iran and its satellites," he said. "We are determined to continue with our aggressive ac-

tion against the efforts of Iran, which calls for our destruction, and against its attempts to entrench militarily in Syria."

Moscow has played a delicate diplomatic game of maintaining friendly ties with both Israel and Iran. Last summer, Moscow struck a deal with Tehran to keep its fighters away from the Golan Heights to accommodate Israeli concerns about the Iranian presence in Syria.

Netanyahu noted that he and Putin have had 11 meetings since September 2015 and hailed "the direct, open and true way in which we maintain the relationship between Russia and Israel."

"The direct connection between us has been an essential element that has

prevented risks and conflicts between our militaries, and that has contributed to regional security and stability," the Israeli leader said.

Netanyahu congratulated Putin on the military holiday Russia marked last weekend and invited him to visit Israel to attend the opening of a monument to the Nazi siege of Leningrad during World War II. "We will never forget the role of Russia and the Red Army in the victory over the Nazis," he said. Putin, a native of the city, accepted the offer.

Netanyahu praised "excellent bilateral relations," noting "more than one million Russian speakers who have made a great contribution to Israel, have turned into a part of us, and have made Russian culture a part of Israeli culture." □





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## On summit sidelines, North Koreans study Vietnam's economy

By ERIC TALMADGE

Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) —

Senior members of North Korea's delegation to Hanoi for Kim Jong Un's summit with President Donald Trump took a side trip Wednesday to visit one of Vietnam's most successful conglomerates.

Kim has several senior foreign and economic advisers with him in Hanoi and gleaned insights into ways to improve the North's economy appears to be high on their list of priorities. As Kim stayed behind to prepare for the summit, a motorcade with former Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong, who is now the ruling party's top foreign policy adviser, and O Su Yong, a ruling party vice chairman and director of its Economic Affairs Department, traveled by car to the port city of Hai Phong, about 105 kilometers (60 miles) east



Students of Vinfast Training Center holding Vietnam and North Korea national flags as they prepare for the arrival of a senior North Korean delegation at VinFast, an automotive startup manufacturer in Hai Phong, Vietnam Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019.

Associated Press

of Hanoi, for a tour of Vinfast, which is part of the Vingroup, Vietnam's largest conglomerate.

Kim's visit for the two-day

summit with Trump is seen as a good chance for Vietnam to show him that a war-ravaged Communist country can produce

billionaires by launching reforms to attract foreign trade and investment.

While Kim wasn't in the motorcade, much of the route

was lined with Vietnamese and North Korean flags. Hundreds of engineering students waved as the limousines entered the factory complex.

Trump has also made a point of how he hopes Kim will follow Vietnam's example.

"Vietnam is thriving like few places on earth. North Korea would be the same, and very quickly, if it would denuclearize," he tweeted on Wednesday before his first meeting with Kim. "The potential is AWESOME, a great opportunity, like almost none other in history, for my friend Kim Jong Un."

Vietnam is one of fastest growing economies in Asia and the Vingroup is one of its flagship successes.

Vinfast's businesses range from real estate development, hospitals and education to car manufacturing, agriculture, retail and resorts. □

## Workers dig by hand to free dozens in Indonesia mine rubble

Associated Press

BOLAANG MONGONDOW, Indonesia (AP) —

A grueling search and rescue effort has saved 19 people from the debris of a collapsed illegal gold mine in Indonesia's North Sulawesi province but officials said Wednesday that several dozen remain trapped.

The national disaster agency said four people are confirmed dead and an estimated 37 are still buried beneath soil and rocks in an area that is difficult to access because of its remoteness and steep terrain.

"The land contour is worrying with an 80 degree slope, so it's pretty steep, and we don't want any unwanted things to happen,"

said local police chief Gani Fernando Siahaan. "We will continue the rescue process until night as long as weather permits."

Emergency personnel used their bare hands and farm tools to search for the victims. Video showed rescuers struggling to bring out a body bag in nearly vertical terrain.

Makeshift wooden structures in the mine in Bolaang Mongondow district collapsed on Tuesday evening due to shifting soil and the large number of mining holes, burying people in the mine pit.

"Unstable soil conditions make us extra careful lifting rocks because it can lead to new landslides," local disaster official Abdul Muin



Rescuers carry the body of a victim of a collapsed mine in Bolaang Mongondow, North Sulawesi, Indonesia, Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019.

Associated Press

Paputungan said. Rescuers heard voices crying for help from beneath the debris, he said.

The disaster agency said at least 140 people from

different agencies are involved in the rescue effort. It said there is an urgent need for body bags.

Informal mining operations are commonplace in In-

donesia, providing a tenuous livelihood to thousands who labor in conditions with a high risk of serious injury or death.

Small artisanal and often unauthorized mining is rising in many parts of Asia and Africa. A study by the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development found the number of people engaged in such mining had risen to over 40 million, up from 30 million in 2014 and 6 million in 1993.

Landslides, flooding and collapses of tunnels are just some of the hazards. Much of the processing of gold ore involves use of highly toxic mercury and cyanide by workers using little or no protection. □



# Next year in Caracas? Venezuelans hope exile will end soon

By **CHRISTINE ARMARIO**

**GISELA SALOMON**

**Associated Press**

**CUCUTA, Colombia (AP)** —

Next year in Caracas?

As Venezuela's opposition rekindles street protests and builds powerful international support, the millions who fled are redirecting their gaze toward their beloved homeland in hopes that their exile will prove short-lived.

Diomira Becerra has been watching the events unfold from Colombia, eyeing every development for a hint of how soon she might be able to pack her bags. She left three years ago and has built a life for her family in the border city of Cucuta. But the country that took them in has never quite felt like home.

"I don't know how it's going to happen, but next Christmas will be in Venezuela," Becerra said.

The high expectations of an exile community that is over 3 million strong are fueling a renewed push from abroad to bring about change in Venezuela. Some like Becerra are tempted to return already, wanting to join in protests. Others, like exiled lawmaker Gaby Arellano, are playing a key role in collecting humanitarian aid. Even many who left long ago and cannot see themselves returning have begun imagining how they might contribute to Venezuela's recovery.

"I want to put in my little grain of sand," said Pedro Morales, a gastroenterologist who has lived in Miami for over two decades.

In the throes of an economic downturn worse than the U.S. Great Depression, Venezuela will need the knowledge, contacts and financial resources many exiles took with them. One prominent economist predicts Venezuela will need a \$60 billion cash infusion just to begin a turnaround. At least a small portion of that could come from exiles eager to invest in Venezuelan businesses, send remittances or buy property.

And yet even as Venezuelans like Becerra daydream of spending next Christ-



In this Feb. 8, 2019 file photo, Venezuela's self-proclaimed president Juan Guaidó speaks during a meeting with university students at the Central University of Venezuela, in Caracas, Venezuela.

**Associated Press**

mas back home with relatives they haven't seen in years, they are also steeling themselves for the possibility that Nicolas Maduro will manage to keep his grip on power. One month after opposition leader Juan Guaidó declared himself Venezuela's interim president, the military has shown little sign that it plans to revolt against Maduro.

At least four people were killed and 300 injured over the weekend when clashes broke out between state security forces, armed pro-government groups and the opposition as they tried to bring food and medical supplies into the country.

Like the exile group they most resemble — Cubans — Venezuelans are all too aware that their current status as emigres could become a permanent condition. Cubans for decades toasted to "Next year in Cuba," a cry that is uttered less and less as their exile from the communist island drags into its 60th year.

Each time Becerra gets the urge to pack her bags, she talks herself out of it. Her daughter and mother, a cancer patient, are comfortable in Colombia. An opposition activist, she wonders if pro-Maduro compatriots might still hold a grudge against her. In her mind, she questions if she'd

even be returning to the same country.

"It has been 20 years of this," she said. "How do you change 20 years?"

Venezuelans began fleeing two decades ago, when revolutionary Hugo Chavez rose to power, in a familiar pattern: Those with money and connections fled first, often to the United States, while the poorer left later, by bus and on foot to Colombia.

The exodus of Venezuelans is now one of the largest mass migrations in the world — an estimated 5,000 cross into Colombia every day, about the same size as the entire migrant caravan from Central America to the U.S. last fall. The United Nations estimates there are 3.4 million Venezuelans abroad, a conservative assessment based on government figures, though the actual number could be as high as 5.5 million.

A study of 2013 Census Bureau data by the Pew Hispanic Center found that Venezuelans in the U.S. have higher levels of education than the general population and a higher median income than most Latinos in the country, an indicator of the skill sets and capital they can contribute to their homeland. Unlike the Cubans who fled decades ago, many

still have fresh memories of Venezuela and want to put their knowledge to use.

"There is a lot of international know-how waiting outside Venezuela," said Daniel Lansberg-Rodriguez, a Venezuela expert who teaches at Northwestern University.

Past experience shows that once a Latin American émigré has been abroad for more than five years, they are very unlikely to return, said Manuel Orozco, director of the Migration, Remittances and Development Program at The Inter-American Dialogue in Washington.

But other countries that have experienced protracted domestic conflicts saw a boom in remittances once political stability was restored and Venezuela could too, if a more effective payment network is established, Orozco said. Still, he warned, it will fall short of what is needed by a nation in such dire straits.

"The diaspora think they can just come and redo the country in a short period of time — it's just not going to be that way," he said.

Frank Carreno, an actor and businessman, said that after 15 years in Miami, where his immediate family is now all located, he wouldn't move back. But

he would like to open a business in Venezuela as he did 10 years ago when he set up three vocal training studios. He closed them in 2013 as the country's economic crisis began to sink in.

"I'd return to invest," he said. "But to live, no. It would mean starting from scratch again. I have my family here and it's just not feasible."

Others, like Gabriela Alvarez, 32, who has lived in Madrid for the last two years, envision themselves returning but want more than just political change. She said she'd want Venezuela's crime rate — among the highest in the world — to improve and to be assured that she and her family could get adequate medical care.

"Venezuela needs us," said Alvarez, who used to work as a producer at a Venezuelan television channel. "The best thing we could do is return to help the country recover."

Venezuelans abroad are already playing a key role in helping Guaidó consolidate his position as the country's interim president. In the years leading up to his proclamation in January, dozens of opposition leaders fled under the threat of arrest.

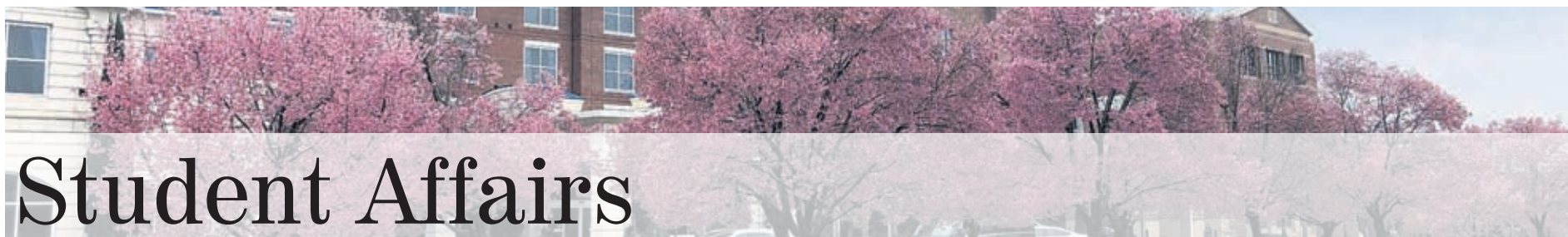
They used their platform outside Venezuela to raise awareness with international leaders and are now helping execute Guaidó's mandates, like findings ways to gather humanitarian aid.

"Exile feels isolating, but we've been able to reinvent ourselves," said exiled lawmaker turned activist Arellano.

Becerra, who can see the Venezuelan mountains from her new home in Cucuta, said her young daughter Hillary often asks when they can go back. She was 4 when they left, but has idyllic childhood memories of her homeland. Becerra struggles with how to respond: "How do I explain to my 7-year-old daughter that the country she remembers doesn't exist anymore?" □



## LOCAL



# Student Affairs

By Louedska Maduro

## Time Management

**ORANJESTAD** — There are many things to do in Columbia such as dining, outdoor activities, attractions and much more. But the real question one should ask themselves, is there ever enough time to do everything? Time can always play an important role in everything you want to do.

As I mentioned in my previous article, I am overwhelmed with quizzes and exams. Which is a big difference for me, since back home we usually focus on research and papers. So, I am still trying to get used to this type of education system. Since most of my time during the week I spend in my dorm studying and doing homework, this can sometimes get in the way of exploring the city, because it takes up all my time during the day. However, school is my top priority at the moment, thus I try my best to plan my days ahead and do as much activities as I possibly can.

My favorite courses up until now, that I am currently taking are Media and Society, which falls into Journalism, Contemporary Moral Issues which relates to Philosophy and the course of Psychology. I really enjoy how well all these courses can connect with each other in different ways. Out of those three, the course of Media and Society still has my top vote since day one. I find it very interesting, how the course manages to explain the growing relationship between media



and society. Also, I love how the lecturer can elaborate on the past and current examples of this growing relationship. This week in class, we are discussing media content and reality. An organization that I really want to mention that has been a great help to me during my stay here is the International Student Services. The International Student Services really help international students, like me, get around campus and explore the city of Columbia.

The International Student Services have an organized schedule with many trips, social events and workshops for international students during their semester. Students get daily newsletter with updates and reminders about the upcoming trips and events. I love this idea and initiative, because it gives international students various opportunities to visit attractions, go on trips and meet new people while considering the students budget. Students just have to sign up for a trip of their

liking and pay a certain fee, which covers the transportation. I find that the International Student Services have always been a great help for me up until now and they have also provided me with so many opportunities to visit all the places that I have wanted to go to in the first place.

Last Friday I went to a chocolate tasting that took place at the international house of Maxcy. Anyone who knows me well, knows that my love for chocolate is never ending. Thus, when I first heard of this event, I signed up immediately. There were guest speakers who spoke about the history of chocolate, the ingredients that are put into certain type of chocolates and the taste differentiation between white chocolate, dark chocolate, milk chocolate and so on. It was very interesting, especially because we all got a bunch of chocolate to taste. There were also many international students present during the

chocolate tasting. I have also managed to meet more Arubans who are currently studying at the University of South Carolina. Which is great, because we sometimes get together as a group and hang out.

They are always giving me suggestions on where to go and what to do here. In addition, it is great to have some friends that are from back home! Over these last few weeks, the weather has been changing drastically. One day it can be very cold and the next day it can be warm. The weather never manages to decide how it wants to be for an entire day.

Next week is spring break, therefore I am hoping that the weather will get much warmer and sunnier. I am counting down the days for spring break, because I definitely need a break from all the quizzes and exams. I am looking forward to visiting new places and relaxing during spring break. □



Louedska Maduro, 25 years old, is currently a third-year student at the University of Aruba in the program of Organization, Governance and Management. Louedska takes part in an exchange abroad during the spring semester. She is now attending the University of South Carolina for the upcoming four months and will take this experience as her inspiration for her column Student Affairs. The column will be in the newspaper every other Thursday.



## Happy Island miracles in pictures & words

• Aruba • Point to Point •



*Federico Cabello Alvarez*

ORANJESTAD - Books, they can shake your world upside down. A good book is changing your mood like that perfect vacation spot that energizes your spirit. Take these two together and what you get is a vacation book, a memory of that wonderful, heavenly place where you spent your valuable leisure time. Aruba Today dived into a local book store and wondered which Aruba books thrill the visitor's mind. Sylvia Wouters, store manager at Bruna Book Store, gladly helped us out and informed us about a small selection of Happy Island miracles in pictures and words.

### Aruba Point to Point by Federico Cabello

"Beautiful pictures of Aruba, this is a perfect coffee table book to dream away with", explains Sylvia. The book has 192 full color pages and more than 400 photos in a landscape format of 9.1 x 6.6 x 1.1 inches. In the words of the author: "Slipping beyond a dynamic tourist industry to discover its wild and undeveloped beauty. Starting at the extreme north of the island, at California Lighthouse, I travel south along pristine beaches of white sand and calm,

translucent seas, passing hotels, sailboats and shipwrecks as I go. At the southern tip, it is hard not to wish that the island would never end. Then back up the rocky East coast, where time and the eternal embrace of the waves have opened secret bays and stunning beaches in the shelter of rock walls. From beach to beach, point to point, cave to cliff to boat to bird, Aruba truly is... One Happy Island."

### Bird Wildlife of Aruba Hardcover by Greg Peterson

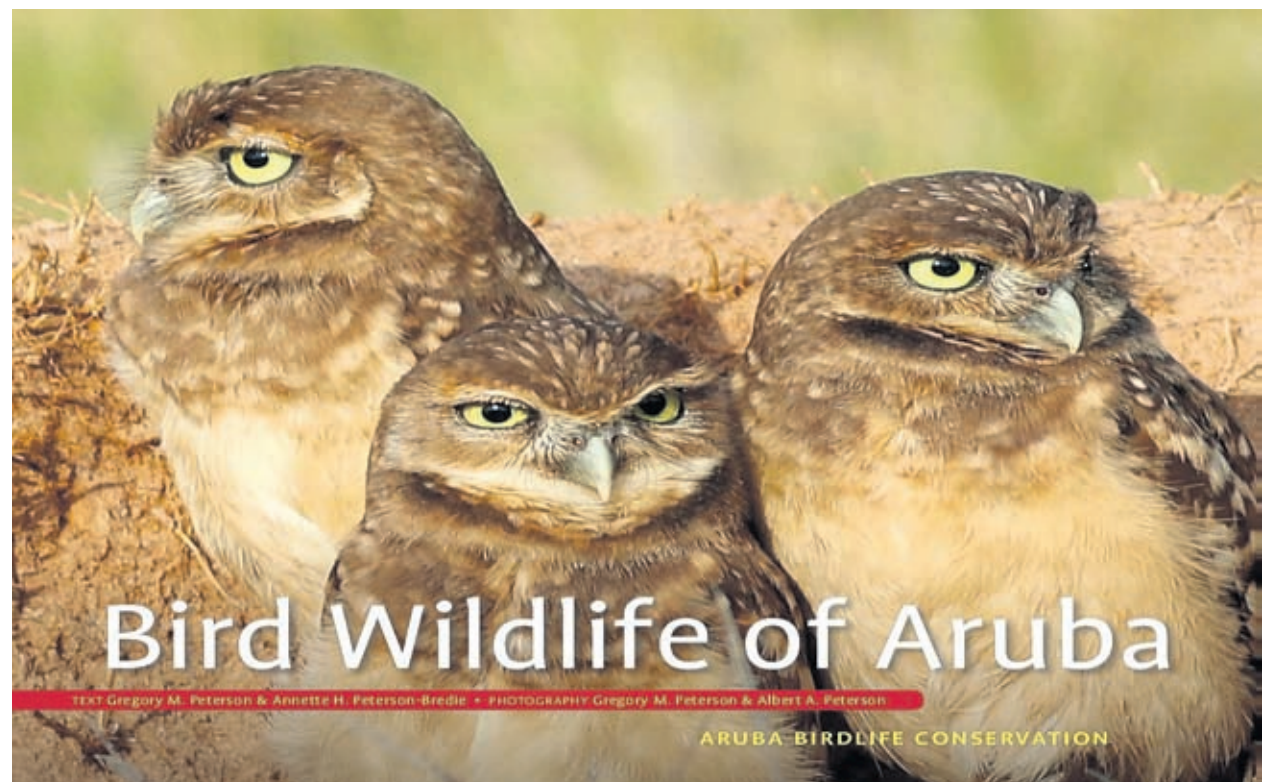
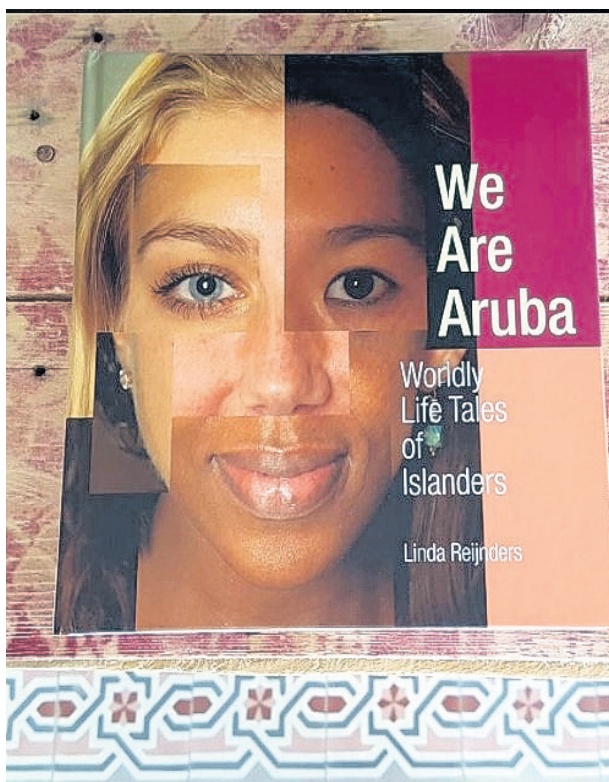
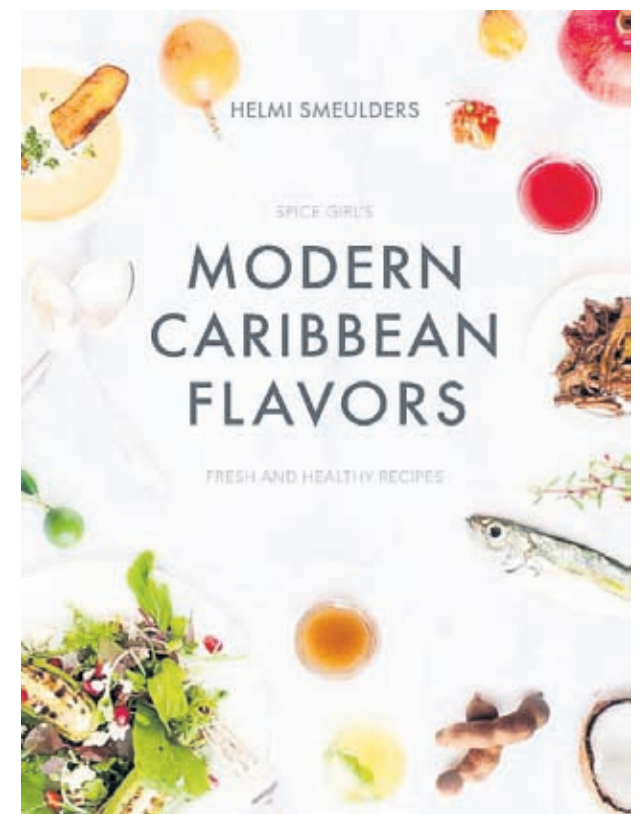
Popular book that gives an overview of Aruba's birds together with descriptions. The book contains full page photographs of over two hundred species of birds taken in Aruba's wildlife. A checklist, for scientific and educational purposes, is at the end of the book containing the names of all bird species that can be found in Aruba. Where possible, the status (resident, migrant, and vagrant, introduced) and abundance (common, fairly common, uncommon, scarce, and rare) of the particular bird species will be added to the checklist.

### Modern Caribbean Flavors by Helmi Smeulders

This is the book about the contemporary Caribbean kitchen with healthy recipes made with fresh and local ingredients. With recipes for Tropical Quinoa Salad with Mango & Pomegranate Seeds, Sweet Potato Salad, Goat Merguez, Watermelon Sangria or Plantain Soup, the Caribbean vibe enters your kitchen, and you feel for a bit you are back in the tropics again....

### We Are Aruba by Linda Reijnders

Worldly life tales of islanders that come from 76 different countries. This is a book that tells the stories of immigrants who make up for the multicultural society that Aruba is. A world within an island, a cocktail of people. The book is visibly enriched with a picture of each interviewed immigrant and an image of her/his country as well as a map with the country's location. In the back you will find a list with all nationalities living in the island and their numbers. □





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## The 1st public dialogue by the University of Aruba: Building Blocks for Sustainable Governance

ORANJESTAD — On Wednesday March 6th, the Aruba Institute for Good Governance and Leadership (\*GG&L) organizes its first public dialogue on core themes of Good Governance. In this keynote lecture, 'Building Blocks for Sustainable Governance', Armand Hessels will discuss what the characteris-

tics and costs are of 'poor' or 'bad' governance. After this he will shift his focus to the transformation towards good governance and on the roadmaps that may bring us there. After the keynote lecture, the dialogue will continue with a contribution by Carlos Guiamo, playing the role of discussant, after which the

audience is invited to join the conversation.

This public dialogue is the first activity of the earlier announced start of an Aruba Institute for Good Governance & Leadership. The Aruba Institute for Good Governance & Leadership is an independent, multi-disciplinary and not-for-

profit competence center of the University of Aruba. The Aruba Institute for Good Governance & Leadership will organize activities for public and private professionals, civil servants, politicians, scholars, administrators and board members, as well as for opinion leaders and the Aruban public at large.

In 2019 the \*GG&L will take off by organizing a series of six public dialogues of which this event is the first. Other themes that will be discussed in the context of Good Governance are integrity; public accountability and responsive governance; responsible leadership; cooperation and collaboration in public services; and media, representation and democracy. In due time the \*GG&L will extend its activities by organizing seminars, training, research and consultancy. The dialogue will take place on March 6th 2019 from 7:00PM till 8:30PM.

For more information see: [www.ua.aw/goodgovernance](http://www.ua.aw/goodgovernance) or contact the program director, Dr. Mieke de Droog

e-mail: [mieke.de.droog@ua.aw](mailto:mieke.de.droog@ua.aw)

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## Condominiums with a Plus

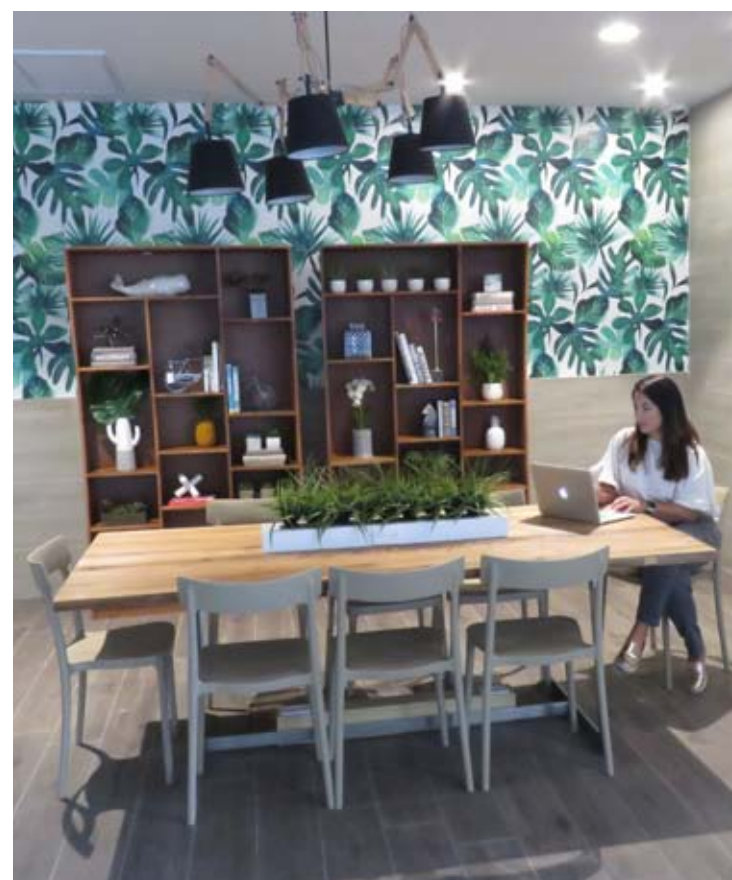


**EAGLE BEACH** — Imagine: a white-sanded beach, blue-turquoise ocean, inviting pool with lazy sun beds and an amazing residence where you feel home, no actually: it IS your home. A dream come true as you are the owner of a condominium at Azure Beach Residences, right on the foot of Aruba's Eagle Beach, a multiple rewarded beach being the best in the Caribbean. Aruba Today talked to one of the enthusiastic sales representatives of this piece of heaven, Marinelda Cataya.

All condominiums face the clear blue ocean with the white-sandy beaches, even the ones on the ground floor. Tower I is completed and space wise you cannot go wrong: the 2 -bedroom condominiums are 1024 sq. ft. and the 3-bedroom units 1670 sq. ft. Storage is included so just leave your chairs and bicycles locked up, even when you rent out your units, rooms are offered in lock offs meaning your personal belongings stay safe in one locked bedroom while the rest of the place can be rented out. Tower II is in construction and will have studios and 1-bedroom units. "And we have our separate building The Club House ready. We are very proud to show it."

### We Can Show the Product

The big plus about this project is that you can actually see the result already, you do not buy from a drawing, and at Azure they can show you the end result for real. The construction of Tower II is running according to schedule, the condominiums are divided and planned to be ready in 2020. This tower has studios and 1- bedroom apartments, Tower I has only 2- and 3- bedroom units", Marinelda explains. Either for investment or pleasure, this is a great opportunity. "The interior of Tower II will differ as we will use more colors and natural elements like wood. Tower I is mainly in white styling. Quality is high, we are going for the newest technology with regards to windows for example. A soft opening is scheduled for the realtors and media to show the product."



### Cozy Club House

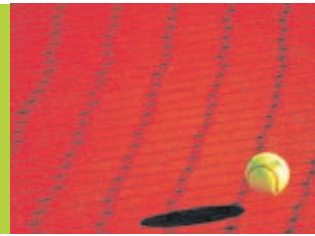
Guests are already using the facilities of the residence and remodeling their homes. "The Club House is finished now and I can tell you honestly that the amenities we have here are unique. They are different from the other condominiums because we have a separate building where we offer a nice lobby, a restaurant bar, the owners club with a pool table, and where you can play chess or any kind of game and an outside area with BBQ/grills so you can bring your family and friends along", says Marinelda. "It creates that family, intimate, homey feeling. By the way we share amenities with Blue Residences where they have a playground for kids as well as a beach tennis field." The Club House restaurant is a kind of open lobby bar with breakfast, lunch and dinner available. The fitness has an amazing view likewise the members club which offers laptop connections and WIFI of course. Other amenities are two infinity pools, a Jacuzzi area and a tennis court. "Important to mention is that we are energy efficient as all units have double glass, we use a well for watering the garden and solar panels for lightning. We are most eco-friendly as possible." says Marinelda. In her opinion potential buyers want to feel trust and that is exactly what Azure offers as you see the finished result of Tower I where they almost sold all units. "So you can feel comfortable with the investment. Unique also is that you will find few condominiums right in front of the beach, so your sunset and ocean view are included. Your condo is delivered with luxury appliances, here you meet the comfort of a resort yet the privacy of your own place. Your home with the convenience of the resort."

For more information you can visit the website <http://www.azure-aruba.com>. The sales office is open every week day from 9 AM -5 PM, Saturdays 10 AM - 1 PM. □

Harbour House is another project of this group that will be launched soon in downtown, offering 94 condominiums, just in front of Renaissance Mall. Studio's and 2-3 bedrooms, a 360 degrees view gym and Jacuzzi on top. Located in the former Marasul building. More information can be found at: [www.Harbourhousearuba.com](http://www.Harbourhousearuba.com)



# SPORTS



Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic, front, competes for control of a rebound against Oklahoma City Thunder center Steven Adams during the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019, in Denver.

Associated Press

## Jokic scores 36 points, Denver beats Thunder 121-112

DENVER (AP) — Nikola Jokic is making his presence felt down the stretch, and that's the way the Denver Nuggets want it. Jokic scored 36 points, including five free throws in the final moments, and the Nuggets fended off Oklahoma City's late rally for a 121-112 victory Tuesday night in a matchup between two of the top three teams in the Western Conference standings. "When the game's on the line, we're going to one guy: Nikola Jokic," Nuggets coach Michael Malone said. "He's been able to score in the post against single coverage, double teams. We've won so many close games ... and a lot of those you can attribute to Nikola being effective and efficient in the post and score, make the right play or go to the foul line and make a free throw."

Continued on Page 21

## FIRE AND ISLES



## Backlund, Andersson score, Flames beat Islanders 3-1

Calgary Flames left wing Andrew Mangiapane (88) checks New York Islanders defenseman Johnny Boychuk (55) behind the net in the first period of an NHL hockey game, Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019, in Uniondale, N.Y.

Associated Press  
Page 20



# Honda Classic gets only 3 of the world's top 20 players

By TIM REYNOLDS

AP Sports Writer

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla.

(AP) — Dustin Johnson, Rory McIlroy and Tiger Woods are among the golfers who live in the vicinity of PGA National and may very well be home this weekend. They just won't be playing at the Honda Classic.

The condensing of the PGA Tour schedule is forcing players to make some tough decisions, and the Honda Classic didn't exactly benefit from a lot of those choices. Only three of the top 20 players in the world ranking are in the field for the event beginning Thursday — No. 3 and defending champion Justin Thomas, No. 4 Brooks Koepka and No. 9 Rickie Fowler. Next up: No. 21 Webb Simpson and No. 23 Gary Woodland.

"There are a lot of guys who live down here," said Woodland, who is one of the South Florida-based players who gets to sleep in his own bed this week. "But with tournaments moving around, there are a lot of tournaments right now that are really good in a row. I skipped Riviera, which is one of my favorite golf courses, but you have to find the time."

Last year at this time, the run of tournaments saw



Brooks Koepka tees off on the fourth hole during the Pro-Am of the Honda Classic golf tournament, Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019, in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

Associated Press

players deciding among Riviera one week, then the Honda Classic, then a World Golf Championship in Mexico, then Tampa, then Bay Hill, then another WGC for Match Play.

This year, it goes Riviera, Mexico, Honda, Bay Hill, The Players Championship, Tampa and then the WGC-Match Play.

That is a lot of really good options, all coming with a lot of players probably mindful of making sure they

are fresh for the Masters as well.

"Nobody's playing five in a row," Honda Classic executive director Ken Kennerly said.

This isn't an issue exclusive to the Honda Classic. Phil Mickelson skipped playing at Torrey Pines, his home course, this year for the first time in 29 seasons — and has hinted that he could sit out The Players Championship as well. Woodland loves Bay Hill but can't fit it

into his schedule this year.

"The field isn't as strong as it typically is because of where it is right now on the schedule," Woodland said. "It's in a tough spot."

Johnson hasn't played the Honda Classic since posting rounds of 77 and 75 and missing the cut by eight shots in 2015, so his absence this week can't be considered surprising.

Not having Woods or McIlroy is different.

Woods finished 12th last

year at the Honda Classic, which he often calls his home event. McIlroy had appeared in the tournament nine times in the last 10 seasons. Woods and McIlroy waged one of the most memorable final-round matchups in Honda history in 2012 — Woods carded an 8-under 62 to vault up the leaderboard, and the then-22-year-old McIlroy wound up winning by two shots to become No. 1 in the world for the first time.

Woods is likely to play four times in a five-tournament stretch. He is coming off starts in Los Angeles and Mexico and plans to compete at Bay Hill next week and The Players the following week. To play five consecutive weeks is a big ask for anyone, particularly someone like Woods, a 43-year-old who has dealt with injuries for years. McIlroy is in the same four-start, five-week stretch as Woods.

It's easy to see how the Honda Classic paid the price. "There are still some great players playing," said Daniel Berger, who — like Johnson, Woods and McIlroy — lives a short drive from PGA National. "But you want guys like Dustin, guys like Tiger, Rory. But it's just a give-and-take." □

## Healthy Michelle Wie returns to Singapore aiming to defend title



In this March 4, 2017, file photo, Michelle Wie of the United States tees off on the 2nd hole during the HSBC Women's Champions golf tournament at Sentosa Golf Club's Tanjong course in Singapore.

Associated Press

SINGAPORE (AP) — The LPGA Tour completes its four-week swing through

Australia and Asia with a healthy Michelle Wie aiming to defend her HSBC

Women's World Championship title at Sentosa Golf Club's Tanjong course.

Wie underwent surgery on her right hand earlier this month because of lingering issues from a car accident two years ago. She played in last week's LPGA Thailand tournament, where she finished tied for 23rd behind winner Amy Yang.

"I feel extremely lucky to even be here this year, so I'm just soaking it all in and having a lot of fun," Wie told a pre-tournament news conference. "Just the feeling that I felt after last year ... I just felt so relieved. I knew that I had overcome a lot of stuff within the last couple of years."

Wie fractured her hand and

sustained extensive neck issues in the car accident. The 29-year-old American is taking precautions to work toward her 2019 goals — playing injury-free, making the Solheim Cup team for a sixth time and attempting to win another major to add to her 2014 U.S. Open triumph.

"I guess as an old person now, a veteran out on tour, physio and recovery is key for me," said Wie, who started on the LPGA Tour in 2009. "My life kind of revolves around it. I travel with my private physio and we have treatment every day, whether it's getting needles in, whether it's icing; I have my devices that I carry around with me."

Wie will be playing for the 10th time in the Singapore tournament and she's joined by world No. 1 Ariya Jutanugarn, along with the top 15 players in the Women's World Golf Rankings, including No. 4 Inbee Park making her season debut. Jutanugarn will tee off Thursday in the last group of the no-cut, 63-player field with No. 3 Sung Hyun Park and No. 7 Minjee Lee. Nelly Korda, who won the Women's Australian Open two weeks ago, leads the 2019 Race to the CME Globe with 780 points, followed by other 2019 winners Eun-Hee Ji (Diamond Resorts Tournament of Champions) with 610 points and Yang with 576. □





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## Johnny Manziel released, barred from other CFL teams

**MONTREAL (AP)** — Johnny Manziel's time in the Canadian Football League is over.

The CFL terminated the 2012 Heisman Trophy winner's contract with the Montreal Alouettes on Wednesday. The league also informed the eight other teams that it wouldn't register a contract for Manziel if any tried to sign him.

"We advised Montreal that Johnny had violated one of the conditions we had set for him to be in our league. And Montreal announced his release today," CFL Commissioner Randy Ambrosie said in Vancouver. "We didn't release the terms of those conditions then and we're not going to do that now."

"We're trying to do what we believe is in the best interests of the entire league. The conditions we set, we thought were the right ones. Those conditions have been violated and we feel it's best, and Montreal feels it's best, to let Johnny move on. And we think it's best for our league that he do the same. And we wish him well."

A post on Manziel's Twitter account indicated he was already looking for other opportunities.

"I want to thank (Alouettes coach Mike Sherman), my teammates and the CFL fans," Manziel tweeted. "My time there re-established my love for the game of football and the work that goes into it. I look forward to exploring new options within the United States."

One option for the former Texas A&M star and



In this Friday, Sept. 14, 2018 file photo, Montreal Alouettes quarterback Johnny Manziel throws a pass during warmups before a CFL football game against the BC Lions in Montreal.

onetime Cleveland Brown could be the Alliance of American Football, which kicked off its inaugural season earlier this month. Manziel said he was intrigued by the prospect of playing in either that or Xtreme Football League, which begins operation next year.

"It's great for football, it's great for the guys who need more opportunity, need more film and time to play," Manziel said on Barstool Sports Comeback SZN podcast. "I don't know exactly what my exact steps will be for the next years coming up, but at least there's a lot of options."

"Me and E.B. (agent Erik Burkhardt) are fully committed to playing ball and trying to get into the best situation possible and that's what it's all about."

In December 2017, CFL commissioner Randy Ambrosie announced the league would approve a contract for the former

Cleveland Browns first-round pick, who at the time was on the Hamilton Tiger-Cats negotiation list. But Manziel had to fulfill certain requirements to join the league.

The league's due diligence included an assessment by an independent expert on domestic violence and a face-to-face meeting between Manziel and Ambrosie.

Exactly what conditions or requirements that were broken or violated weren't divulged. Manziel had sought treatment for anger management and alcohol abuse as part of his acquit-

tal on a 2016 charge of domestic violence.

Manziel eventually ended up signing with Hamilton in May 2018 but was unable to get on to the field behind starter Jeremiah Masoli. The Tiger-Cats dealt Manziel and offensive linemen Tony Washington and Landon Rice in a trade with Montreal on July 23 for receiver Chris Williams, defensive end Jamaal Westerman and two first-round draft picks (2020, '21).

The move reunited Manziel with Sherman, who recruited him to Texas A&M. Acquired to be Montreal's No. 1 quarterback, the 26-year-

old nicknamed Johnny Football went 2-6 as a starter, completing 106 of 165 passes (64.2 percent) for 1,290 yards with five TDs and seven interceptions.

He also ran for 215 yards on 29 carries as Montreal (5-13) finished third in the East Division but missed the CFL playoffs.

"We are disappointed by this turn of events," Alouettes GM Kavis Reed said in a statement. "Johnny was provided a great deal of support by our organization, in collaboration with the CFL, but he has been unable to abide by the terms of his agreement."

"We worked with the league and presented alternatives to Johnny, who was unwilling to proceed." Manziel was taken in the first round, No. 22 overall, in the 2014 NFL draft by Cleveland. But following two tumultuous seasons, the Browns released the Tyler, Texas, native in March 2016 after he posted a 2-6 record as their starter.

Manziel appeared in just 14 games with Cleveland, completing 147 of 258 attempts (57.0 percent) for 1,675 yards with seven touchdowns and seven interceptions. He also ran for 259 yards and a touchdown. □





# Capitals rebound from 2-goal deficit, beat Senators 7-2

By The Associated Press  
WASHINGTON (AP) —

The reigning Stanley Cup champion Washington Capitals spotted the NHL-worst Ottawa Senators an early two-goal lead before turning things around with the help of a pair of second-period scores from T.J. Oshie and winning 7-2 Tuesday night.

Oshie reached 20 goals in a season for the fourth time, while Evgeny Kuznetsov, Tom Wilson, Lars Eller, John Carlson and Brett Connolly also scored. Braden Holtby made 21 saves as Washington won for the fourth time in five games.

The Senators dropped their fifth straight and have lost seven of eight. They have the fewest points in the league and a roster depleted by a trade deadline sell-off.

The Senators jumped out to a 2-0 lead in the first 7 minutes, 10 seconds, with both scores coming courtesy of players that arrived in deals. Not just that, but the Senators took the game's initial nine shots; the hosts didn't get one until the first period was more than 10 minutes old.

Less than 3½ minutes in, newly acquired Oscar Lindberg scored off a pass from Brian Gibbons. Ottawa doubled its lead on Anthony Duclair's power-play goal. That gave the Senators twice as many goals as they had managed in their previous three games combined.

**BRUINS 4, SHARKS 1**  
BOSTON (AP) — Charlie McAvoy and Jake DeBrusk scored 37 seconds apart in the second period and Boston won for the eighth time in nine games.

Brad Marchand had a short-handed goal and two assists, David Krejci added a goal and an assist, and Jaroslav Halak made 19 saves. The surging Bruins have earned at least one point in 14 straight games. Logan Couture scored for San Jose, and Martin Jones stopped 28 shots.

The Sharks, who lost to the Bruins for the second time in eight days, wrapped up a 2-2 Eastern Conference



Washington Capitals right wing T.J. Oshie (77) scores a goal against Ottawa Senators goaltender Anders Nilsson (31), of Sweden, and defenseman Thomas Chabot (72) during the second period of an NHL hockey game, Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019, in Washington.

Associated Press

swing.

**FLAMES 3, ISLANDERS 1**  
UNIONDALE, N.Y. (AP) — Mikael Backlund and Rasmus Andersson scored nearly three minutes apart in the third period and Calgary won its season-high sixth straight game.

Mathew Tkachuk also scored and Elias Lindholm had two assists for Pacific Division- and Western Conference-leading Calgary, which won both matchups between the first-place teams in a seven-day stretch. Mike Smith finished with 26 saves to improve to 5-0-1 in his last six starts, including a 4-2 win over the Islanders at home last Wednesday.

Josh Bailey scored for New York, and Robin Lehner stopped 24 shots. The Islanders are 1-2-1 in their last four.

**BLUES 2, PREDATORS 0**  
ST. LOUIS (AP) — Tyler Bozak broke a scoreless tie with 7:25 left and Jordan Binnington earned his fifth shutout in two months as St. Louis beat Nashville.

Binnington stopped 19 shots. All his shutouts have come since Jan. 7, when he made his first NHL start. He is 14-2-1 in that span. Bozak took a cross-ice pass from Vladimir Tarasenko in the third period and put the puck through the legs of Predators goalie Juuse

Saros, who made 42 saves. Alex Pietrangelo added an empty-net goal on a power play with four seconds remaining.

St. Louis won the season series 4-1-0, taking the final four matchups from its Central Division rival. The Blues are 11-4-0 in their last 15 games against the Predators, who have a one-point lead in the division over Winnipeg. St. Louis has won its past seven home games, the longest active streak in the league. The third-place Blues also set a franchise record with 12 wins in February and matched their mark for any month (April 2013).

**WILD 3, JETS 2**  
WINNIPEG, Manitoba (AP) — Jason Zucker and Joel Eriksson Ek scored 26 seconds apart late in the third period, and Minnesota rallied past Winnipeg for its fourth straight win.

Zucker beat a screened Connor Hellebuyck at 18:33, and Eriksson Ek's goal withstood a replay review and a goaltender interference challenge by the Jets at 18:59. Brad Hunt had the other goal for the Wild, and Devan Dubnyk made 30 saves. Minnesota won all four games against Winnipeg this season.

Patrik Laine had a goal and an assist and Mark Scheif-

ele also scored for the Jets, who are 1-4-1 in their last six games. Hellebuyck stopped 36 shots.

**PENGUINS 5, BLUE JACKETS 2**  
COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Jared McCann scored twice, Matt Murray made 21 saves and Pittsburgh beat Columbus.

Jake Guentzel, Evgeni Malkin and Sidney Crosby also scored for Pittsburgh, which snapped a two-game skid. Oliver Bjorkstrand and Cam Atkinson scored, and Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 22 shots for the Blue Jackets, who lost after posting back-to-back shutouts last week and revamping their lineup just before Monday's trade deadline. Columbus started the day in third place in the division.

**HURRICANES 6, KINGS 1**  
RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Dougie Hamilton had two goals and an assist and Carolina topped Los Angeles for its third straight win.

Teuvo Teravainen added a goal and three assists, Micheal Ferland had a goal and an assist and Sebastian Aho and Jaccob Slavin also scored for the Hurricanes. Jordan Staal finished with three assists. Dustin Brown scored Los Angeles' lone goal. The Kings have lost nine straight (0-6-3) and are in last place in the Western Conference.

The Kings haven't won since Feb. 7, and are in the midst of their worst losing streak since dropping a franchise-record 11 straight in 2004.

**FLYERS 5, SABRES 2**  
PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Jake Voracek, James van Riemsdyk and Claude Giroux scored as Philadelphia kept its tenuous playoff hopes alive with a win over Buffalo.

Oskar Lindblom scored just 2:48 into the game and Travis Sanheim netted his sixth of the season just 46 seconds into the third for Philadelphia. Brian Elliott made 34 saves.

Jack Eichel scored his 22nd goal and Casey Mittelstadt had his ninth of the season for the Sabres, who began the day in 10th place (66 points), but were passed by the Flyers (67 points) in the chase for the final Eastern Conference playoff spot.

**CANADIENS 8, RED WINGS 1**  
DETROIT (AP) — Andrew Shaw recorded his first career hat trick and Max Domi had two goals and three assists for a career-high five points in Montreal's rout of Detroit. Tomas Tatar, Brendan Gallagher, and Joel Armia also scored for Montreal. Jonathan Drouin had a career-best four assists, defenseman Jordie Benn added two assists and Carey Price made 28 saves.

Anthony Mantha scored for Detroit, which allowed a hat trick for the second straight game. Jimmy Howard returned after missing two games due to illness and made 16 saves and allowed six goals before being pulled after the second period. Howard has been pulled in three consecutive starts. Jonathan Bernier stopped 10 shots in relief.

**GOLDEN KNIGHTS 4, STARS 1**

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Max Pacioretty scored two goals, including the tiebreaker with 5:08 remaining, to lift Vegas over Dallas.

With the teams tied 1-all, Pacioretty fired the puck from behind the net and it ricocheted off Stars forward Tyler Seguin's skate past goaltender Ben Bishop for his fourth game-winner of the season. □



# Knicks reserves key 108-103 win over Magic

**NEW YORK (AP)** — If the Knicks are supposed to be tanking, someone forgot to tell their back-ups.

Emmanuel Mudiay, Mitchell Robinson and the rest of the New York Knicks who came off the bench outscored the Orlando Magic's reserves by a whopping 75-7 in a 108-103 win on Tuesday night at Madison Square Garden.

Mudiay finished with 19 points and Robinson added 17 points, 14 rebounds, six blocks, and three steals to help the Knicks win their second straight game at home after they dropped 18 in a row at MSG.

Robinson joined Ralph Sampson (1984) and David Robinson (1989) as the only rookies to post those numbers in a game since blocks became an official stat in 1973-73.

"He's making history right now," said Knicks Coach David Fizdale. "Every single day he continues to grow and get better. His impact on the defensive end is special. The guy is block-

ing jumpers. He's guarding guards."

The Knicks never led in the game until Robinson's free throw with 2:57 remaining put New York in front 101-100.

Henry Ellison followed with a 3-pointer and Mudiay hit two free throws with 33 seconds left. Ellison, who is on a 10-day contract and was only appearing in his second game with the Knicks, played 36 minutes off the bench and finished with 13 points, nine rebounds and five assists.

"Coach Fiz left me in there for a while," Ellison said. "I looked back a couple of times because I didn't expect it. He just gave me an opportunity to go out there and play. It was a lot of fun. I couldn't tell you the last time I played 36 minutes."

Terrence Ross' 3-pointer with 28 seconds remaining brought the Magic within three. Allonzo Trier, another back-up, then hit two free throws five seconds later for the final margin. He finished with 18 points.

"Coach is doing what he does with the lineup based on how he feels during the game and he had the whole bench together and it worked tonight," Trier explained.

Nikola Vucevic and Aaron Gordon each scored 26 points for the Magic, who held a 16-point lead in the second quarter. They were still up 90-78 entering the fourth.

New York outscored Orlando 11-1 to open the final quarter and eventually pulled even on Robinson's alley-oop dunk from Trier with four minutes left.

The Knicks have now won three of four after losing 18 straight games.

"They play with nothing to lose," Gordon said. "When they get confidence and start making shots, they feel like they can play with anybody so that's what they did."

Jonathan Isaac scored 16 points and Evan Fournier added 15 for the Magic, who had won six of their previous seven games. □



New York Knicks' Mitchell Robinson (26) dunks in front of Orlando Magic's Jonathan Isaac (1) during the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019, in New York. The Knicks won 108-103.

Associated Press

## JOKIC SCORES

Continued from Page 17

Jokic said he's getting to the point where he's looking for the ball and anticipating it will come his way at crunch time, and it's a role he is embracing.

"Even if I don't score, I think I can bring something. I can make a good pass," Jokic said. "I think the coaches are comfortable to call plays for me and I think the team trusts me."

Jokic added 10 assists and nine rebounds to finish just shy of his 13th triple-double this season for the Nuggets who won their fifth straight and ninth in a row at home. They improved to 3-0 against the Thunder this season, clinching the four-game season series between the Northwest Division rivals.

"To have beaten them three times this year says a lot about our team. I don't even think we've played our best basketball yet,"

Malone said.

Will Barton added 23 points and Jamal Murray 20 for Denver, which extended its division lead over the Thunder to four games.

Paul George had 25 points to lead Oklahoma City which fought back from an 18-point deficit in the second half but could not sustain its rally in the late going.

Russell Westbrook finish an assist shy of a triple-double with 22 points, 14 rebounds and nine assists. Jerami Grant added 21 points.

Oklahoma City got back into the game by turning up its defense, forcing five turnovers in six Denver possessions in one stretch, to pull into a 97-all tie on a 3-pointer by Dennis Schroder with 6:02 left to play.

Westbrook followed by hitting a 3-pointer to give the Thunder its first lead since early in the first half.

Denver, though, fought back, retaking the lead on



Oklahoma City Thunder guard Russell Westbrook yells to referees for an explanation after he was called for a foul during the second half of the team's NBA basketball game against the Denver Nuggets on Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019, in Denver.

Associated Press

a 3-pointer by Murray. The game remained tight down the stretch. Murray hit another 3-pointer and Jokic put in a layup around a Westbrook layup for a 112-106 Denver lead with 1:36 remaining. Jokic

helped Denver solidify its lead and quash Oklahoma City's comeback in the final moments by making five of six free throws to boost the Nuggets' advantage to 117-108 with 44 seconds remaining.

"We had some things that we were able to control that we didn't do a good enough job of, and that part of it was disappointing," Thunder coach Billy Donovan said. "Because the guys, I thought, battled and worked so hard to get back in the game to give ourselves a chance."

Trailing by 13 at the half, the Thunder scored the first eight points of the third quarter, including 3-pointers by Westbrook and George to equal the number of 3s Oklahoma City had in the first half. But the Nuggets' got going on offense again and pulled in front by as many as 18 points before George hit a 3-pointer from the half-court line as the Thunder pulled to 91-78 going into the fourth quarter. Jokic connected on successive 3-pointers in the last 56 seconds of the second quarter, and Denver moved in front 64-51 at the half. □



# Managers, coaches adjust to get most out of millennials

By JAY COHEN

AP Sports Writer

**MESA, Ariz. (AP)** — In the aftermath of Chicago's collapse last season, Cubs manager Joe Maddon went looking for a deeper understanding of the players who dominate the major leagues these days.

Maddon's search took him to "Managing Millennials for Dummies," and the book reinforced what he already felt about the people he worked with every day.

"The big takeaway is that they're no different than anybody else," a chuckling Maddon said. "When you break it down and you go back to your own childhood we all had inefficiencies as young people. The biggest takeaway I think are two things; that the propensity to be inclined to utilize technology, which is wonderful because I've done that anyway, and then, they as a group like wanting to know why."

Millennials make up the vast majority of the majors

today, and their influence is felt all over the sport.

They were the earliest adopters of the advanced statistics that have become commonplace throughout baseball, and they inform much of what they do on the mound or at the plate. They want to know the reasoning behind what their coaches want them to do.

"I've learned this generation is nothing like the generation I grew up in," Royals manager Ned Yost said. "Nothing like it. You have to learn and have an open mind to find out what makes these kids tick, how they grew up. They're so diverse and their way of communicating is different in Southern California, kids in the South, kids in the East. It's just taking the time to get to know them and how to communicate."

The millennial generation became a hot topic in Chicago when the Cubs fired hitting coach Chili Davis after they struggled to score in the final few days of last



In this Feb. 24, 2018, file photo, Chicago Cubs manager Joe Maddon visits the mound during the second inning of a spring training baseball game against the Texas Rangers, in Mesa, Ariz.

season, culminating in their 2-1, 13-inning loss to Colorado in the NL Wild Card Game.

Davis told the Chicago Sun-Times that he needed to make some adjustments to how he delivers his message to millennials, and he planned to know more about his potential players before he accepted another job. He was hired as hitting coach for the New York Mets in December.

"You learn from every place you go," Davis said during spring training. "You know, there's a lot of different per-

sonalities to try to connect with. And sometimes you connect with most of them, you hope you connect with all of 'em — that's a rarity. But you know, I had great kids in Boston, I thought I had some really good kids over in Chicago last year and I'm really enjoying the guys I'm around this year." Defining a generation "is an art and a science," said Kate Turkcan, who is the head of youth insights for Kantar Consulting. Turkcan said millennials were born between 1979 and 1996, and centennials — the next

major generation for baseball — began in 1997 and ended between four and eight years ago.

Turkcan, who has worked with universities and companies like Samsung, Coca-Cola and Target, said the millennial stereotype of entitled young person is misguided.

"They're not asking why to be difficult. They're asking why because they've grown up in a generation or in a world where you need proof for everything, you need back up," she said. □

## Federer reaches Dubai quarterfinals; Nishikori eliminated

**DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)** — Roger Federer maintained his perfect record against Fernando Verdasco to reach the Dubai Championships quarterfinals on Wednesday, while top-seeded Kei Nishikori was eliminated. Federer converted his first match point when Verdasco sent a forehand wide, finishing off a 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 win that improved his record against the Spaniard to 7-0. Nishikori, though, lost 7-5, 5-7, 6-2 against Hubert Hurkacz of Poland.

This was win No. 50 for Federer in Dubai, having won the tournament seven times.

"It's a big number," the 37-year-old Federer said when told it was his 50th win. "I'm not sure if I'm going to get to 100. Let's put it that way."



Roger Federer of Switzerland serves to Fernando Verdasco of Spain during their match at the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championship, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019.

Associated Press

He's only three matches away from a 100th tournament title, though, and will next face Marton Fucsovics of Hungary, who beat Jan-Lennard Struff of Germany

6-4, 6-2. Federer has only played Fucsovics once, at last year's Australian Open, but has trained with him in Zurich and said he's been impressed with the Hungar-

ian's game.

"I know Marton quite well actually," Federer said. "He's improved. He likes the fast surfaces. He likes to play up in the court. He has the power when required. I think it's going to be definitely a match that's going to test me tomorrow."

The second-seeded Federer is now an even bigger favorite for the title with Nishikori out. It was Hurkacz's first win against top-10 ranked player and earned him a place in his first ATP tour quarterfinal.

"It's a huge win for me," Hurkacz said. "It gives me huge confidence. I'm going to try to keep going forward." Hurkacz converted six of his seven break points, including one when Nishikori was serving for the first set at 5-4. He also broke for a 3-1 lead in the final set with

a backhand down the line and again in the last game when the Japanese player hit a forehand long.

"He played well today," Nishikori said. "I didn't serve well when I wanted to. It happens. That cost me some important points. I think he really played well in the important games."

Hurkacz will next play fifth-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece, who eased past Belarusian qualifier Egor Gerasimov 6-3, 6-1 in less than an hour. Tsitsipas beat Hurkacz last week in Marseille en route to his second career title.

Gael Monfils also advanced by knocking out Cypriot wild-card entry Marcos Baghdatis 6-3, 6-2 and will face Lithuanian qualifier Ricardas Berankis, who ousted Denis Kudla of the United States 6-4, 6-1.



# Women's World Cup countdown begins in earnest

By ANNE M. PETERSON

AP Sports Writer

The Women's World Cup countdown has begun in earnest.

Wednesday marked 100 days until the kickoff of the game's biggest tournament, opening on June 7 in Paris. The 24-team event will be played at nine stadiums in France over the course of a month, with the final set for July 7 in Lyon.

The United States is the defending champion, having won the 2015 World Cup in Canada. The top-ranked Americans are also the presumptive favorites this time around.

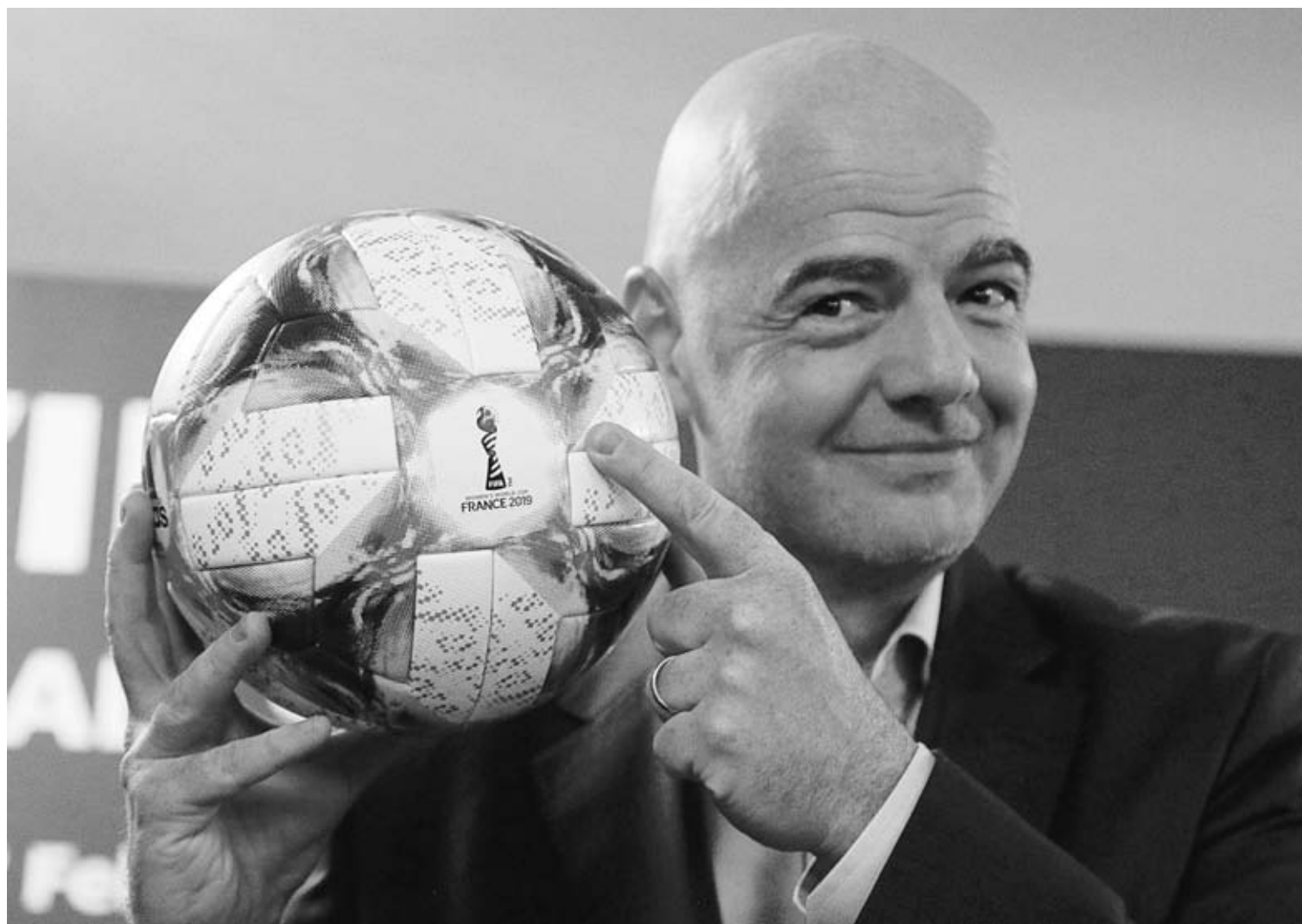
So far, ticket sales have been strong, with more than 500,000 of an allotment of 1.3 million sold following the ticket package launch and the presale phase, FIFA announced Wednesday. Single-match tickets go on sale March 7.

"I'm convinced that after this World Cup the way women's soccer is viewed in the world will change," FIFA President Gianni Infantino said at a news conference in Rome on Wednesday. "We expect 1 billion TV viewers and 1.3 million fans in the stadiums. They have already sold more than half of the tickets. Women's soccer has made a huge progression. The players are real athletes who play well technically and tactically. They could give a lot of us some lessons."

There are a few lingering controversies hanging over the event, including prize money. Last October, the FIFA Council raised the prize money from \$15 million in 2015 to \$30 million in France. By contrast, the prize pool for the men's World Cup in Russia last year was \$400 million.

In 2015, the U.S. women received \$2 million for raising the trophy, and the winner this summer will earn \$4 million. The French men, who won their World Cup, earned \$38 million.

While the men's World Cup generates far more revenue, critics say FIFA should back up its pledges to grow the women's game with investment and incentives —



FIFA President Gianni Infantino holds the official ball of the upcoming Women's Soccer World Championship as he poses for photographers during a press conference at the end of an executive committee meeting in Rome, Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019.

Associated Press

like a sweeter prize pool.

Another issue is timing. FIFA has been criticized for scheduling the Women's World Cup final on the same day as the men's Copa America final and the CONCACAF Gold Cup final. Here are some other things to watch in the 100 days leading up to the World Cup.

**VIDEO WATCH:** The next Women's World Cup milestone for FIFA is confirming the use of video review.

The prospect of VAR in France looked in doubt as FIFA prevaricated when asked if women's players would benefit from the same technology that debuted at the men's World Cup in Russia last year.

But FIFA confirmed its Women's World Cup referees were training with VAR earlier this month. The FIFA Council has to ratify the use of VAR at a meeting in Miami next month.

**LAST-MINUTE CHANGES:**

Australia shocked many with January's dismissal of coach Alen Stajcic, who had been coach of the

Matildas since 2014 and still had nine months left on his contract.

The Australian federation said it fired Stajcic following an internal review and Ante Milicic was named to take over through the World Cup.

Milicic is not the only one jumping aboard a team so late in the process. Cameroon coach Joseph Ndo-ko was replaced by Alain Djeumfa in January. Known as the Lionesses, Cameroon advanced to the knockout round in Canada but the team has struggled recently with preparation for France. The move was somewhat of a surprise because Ndoko had guided the team to a third-place finish at the Women's Africa Cup of Nations late last year, qualifying Cameroon for the World Cup.

**TUNING UP:** The 100-day mark also means teams are going all-in on preparation for the event. The United States is hosting the She-Believes Cup with Japan, England and Brazil — all World Cup-bound teams.

There's also the annual Algarve Cup in Portugal, which starts Thursday and features Canada, Sweden, Spain and several other teams.

Australia is hosting the inaugural Cup of Nations, which will also include New Zealand, Argentina and South Korea, starting Thursday.

"We've got eight games left," U.S. coach Jill Ellis said Tuesday about the remaining schedule. "Every minute we can get the players together to forge those relationships is really important." But there's far more urgency for teams that normally don't have many regular exhibition games. Chile and Jamaica, who will each make their World Cup debut in France, will play a pair of matches in Jamaica, with the first on Thursday in Kingston.

"Chile have played Brazil and Italy recently, therefore we'll get an opportunity to measure where we are as a team," Jamaica coach Hue Menzies told reporters last week. The Reggae Girls, ranked No. 53 in the

world, are also expected to play a friendly against Panama as the team prepares for the World Cup.

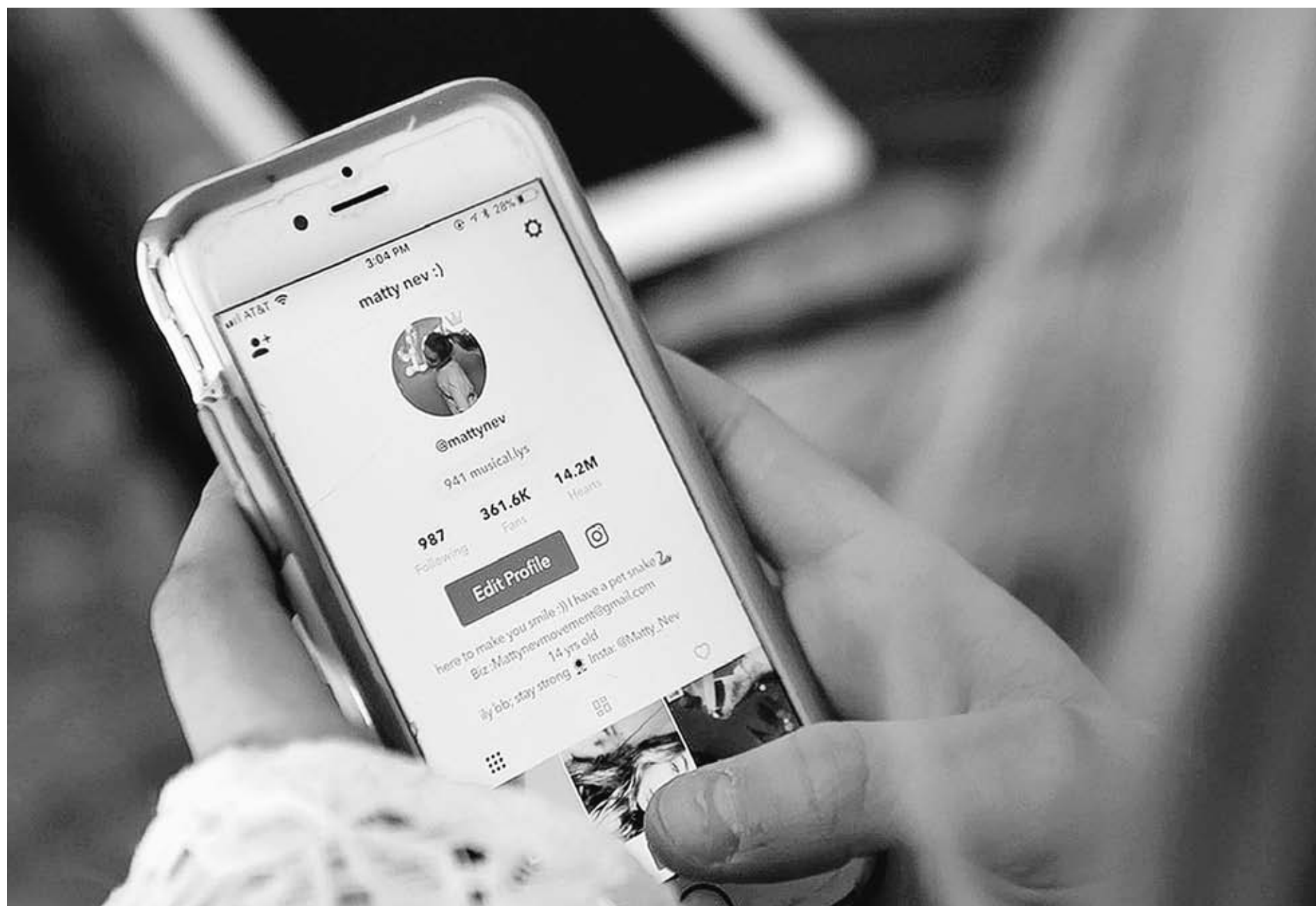
**FOCUS:** U.S. goalkeeper Alyssa Naeher was on the champion 2015 squad, albeit as a backup to goalkeeper Hope Solo. Now the presumed starter in France, Naeher is tempering her excitement and focusing on the work to be done.

"I mean, yes, it's exciting to start a countdown like that (the 100 days) and it kind of builds the excitement around the whole event. But for me it's kind of staying focused in the moment," Naeher said.

**HEGERBERG OUT:** Norway coach Martin Sjogren told the BBC that there is no chance that Ballon d'Or winner Ada Hegerberg will play in the World Cup. Hegerberg, who stepped away from the national team, has taken a stand against what she said was a lack of respect for female players in Norway. Sjogren said discussions were held, but ultimately Hegerberg decided not to play. □



# Teen video app Musical.ly agrees to FTC fine



In this Feb. 28, 2018 photo, Matty Nev Luby holds her phone and logs into the lip-sync smartphone app Musical.ly, in Wethersfield, Conn.

Associated Press

By **MATT O'BRIEN**

**AP Technology Writer**

The operator of a video-sharing app popular with teenagers agreed to pay \$5.7 million to settle federal allegations it illegally collected personal information from children.

The Federal Trade Commission said the Wednesday penalty against lip-syncing app Musical.ly, now known as TikTok, is the largest ever obtained in a children's privacy case.

The FTC said the app violated the federal Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, which requires kid-oriented websites to get parents' consent before collecting personal information from children under 13. The app changed its practices in 2017 to officially ban kids under 13 from joining, but it wasn't hard to find children as young as

8 or 9 sharing short videos of themselves on the platform.

"Just because you say it's intended for over-13 doesn't mean that it is," said Andrew Smith, director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection, in a conference call Wednesday.

Musical.ly, founded in 2014 and registered in the Cayman Islands, grew rapidly and operated out of offices in Shanghai and California. The FTC said the app has been downloaded by more than 200 million people worldwide, and 65 million in the U.S.

It built a devoted community of self-described "musers" who regularly shared lip-syncing, dancing, gymnastics or comedy videos. But the app also raised concerns among many parents, especially after news reports of adult predators

using the app to contact children.

Smith said that along with failing to adequately seek parent's permission, the operators of Musical.ly didn't honor parents' requests for personal information to be deleted. Smith said the company deleted some under-age accounts but didn't delete their videos and profile information from its own servers.

Profile information often included email addresses as well as a child's name, age, school and picture. Until October 2016, one of the app's features allowed users to find nearby users within a 50-mile radius.

Beijing-based ByteDance Technology announced it was acquiring the platform in late 2017, and last summer folded Musical.ly into its own popular video app, TikTok, which is based in Los

Angeles.

TikTok said in a blog post Wednesday that in conjunction with the FTC agreement, it's starting a separate app for younger U.S. users with stronger safety and privacy protections. Children using the new app will be able to watch videos but won't be able to share their own videos, make comments, maintain a profile or message other users.

TikTok's intention to start a new app for children was troubling to Josh Golin, who directs the Boston-based Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood.

"TikTok should be nowhere near children and children should be nowhere near TikTok," Golin said.

Golin and other privacy advocates were also underwhelmed by FTC's record fine, arguing that big

companies like ByteDance will see it as merely the cost of doing business.

Massachusetts Democratic U.S. Sen. Edward Markey, who authored the decades-old privacy law the FTC's complaint was based on, said in a statement Wednesday that the fine "is not high enough for the harm that is done to children and to deter violations of the law in the future by other companies."

Children's advocates have pushed the FTC to investigate whether other companies, including Google's YouTube, are similarly violating children's online privacy.

The FTC said its Musical.ly investigation was sparked in part by a referral from the Better Business Bureau's Children's Advertising Review Unit, a group set up by industry to regulate itself. □



## Featured Homes for SALE

**\$265.000.00**

Bubali # 113c  
3Bedr w/ additional  
guest studio  
Semi detached home

**\$329.000.00**

Caya Ritmo # 35  
4 Bedr 2 Story Home  
Eagle Beach area

**\$575.000.00**

Oceania # 213  
2Bed/2Bath ocean front  
Condo.

**\$650.000.00**

Tamarijn \$ 59  
4Bedr home w/ sweeping  
island views, open air  
courtyard & lap pool

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**\$320.000.00**

Jardines Del Mar # 12  
2Bed/2.5 Bath townhome  
w pool view in gated  
community

**\$449.000.00**

Opal # 223 Surfside Res.  
4Bed/3.5Bath w/ lock off  
apartment

**\$625.000.00**

Rooi Santo # 25m  
4Bed/4Bath home with  
pool, jacuzzi, gym &  
outdoor kitchen

**\$699.000.00**

Salina Cerca # 37b  
5Bed home with lush gardens  
& large private pool  
Close to the Marriott Resort

**\$775.000.00**

Oceania Residence # 513  
2Bed/2Bath Ocean front  
Penthouse condo w/ jacuzzi  
& private roof top patio



## Liz Weston: Should you move abroad for health care?

By LIZ WESTON  
Associated Press

The notion that health care outside the U.S. could be good as well as cheap is a foreign one to many Americans.

Kathleen Peddicord frequently hears from such skeptics as founder of Live and Invest Overseas, a site for people curious about living abroad. Actual expats like her, however, tell of good-quality care at a fraction of the U.S. price. Treatment for a motorbike accident in Panama cost her \$20. Emergency dental surgery that might cost \$10,000 or more in the U.S. was \$4,500 in Paris. In many countries, medications that would require a prescription in the States are available directly from licensed pharmacies at low prices, thanks to government subsidies or regulation.

"The health care in a lot of places around the world is very good, as good as in the United States," says Peddicord, who currently divides her time between Paris and Panama. "Some places, it is better."

Low-cost, quality health care usually isn't the main reason people move abroad, says expat and Mexico resident Don Murray, who writes for rival site International Living. But reduced medical expenses are part of the lower living costs that prompt many Americans to relocate, he says.

### EXPAT NUMBERS ARE ON THE RISE

About 9 million Americans who aren't in the military live outside the U.S., according to State Department estimates. That's increased considerably from its 1999 estimate of 3 million to 6 million. The number could rise in coming years as millions more Americans barrel toward retirement without enough income to maintain their standard of living at home.

Health care is a particular concern for Americans who want to retire before age 65, when Medicare, the government health program for seniors, kicks in. Currently, early retirees can buy coverage through the Affordable Care Act, but it's not always truly affordable and its future is uncertain.

Some who would otherwise retire plan to keep working, rather than risk being uninsured. But a move abroad could be an option for those intrepid enough to try it.

Cheaper health care also may appeal to gig economy workers who aren't tied to stateside jobs. Freelance science writer Erica Rex, for example, recently wrote an opinion column for The New York Times about moving to the United Kingdom and then France after her 2009 cancer diagnosis. "Moving to Europe was a choice weighed against other, grimmer options for



This April 2017 file photo provided by NerdWallet shows Liz Weston, a columnist for personal finance website NerdWallet.com.

Associated Press

health care, which included the strong possibility of being bankrupted by cancer treatment and winding up at the mercy of New York State's welfare system," she wrote.

### HEALTH CARE QUALITY VARIES BY DESTINATION

Not all expat havens have great health care systems. Belize, for example, encourages immigration by exempting retirees from most income taxes — but many expats there cross the border to Mexico for health care, Peddicord says.

France, on the other hand, is known for its excellent health care system. Inter-

national Living and Live and Invest Overseas give the country top marks, along with Mexico, Ecuador and Malaysia. International Living praises Thailand and Costa Rica as well, while Live and Invest Overseas says Portugal, Italy and Malta have admirable health care.

With any country, quality can vary — especially in sparsely populated areas. Murray and his wife, Diane, left their first retirement destination, a small town in Ecuador, after encountering broken equipment and few doctors. They're much happier with the care near

their Yucatan Peninsula home, where next-day appointments are the norm and doctors are typically trained in the U.S. or Europe, he says.

"It's like in the U.S. — if you live in Possum Belly, Alabama, and they don't have a hospital and the nearest one is an hour and a half away, the health care isn't going to be the same" as in a major city, Murray says.

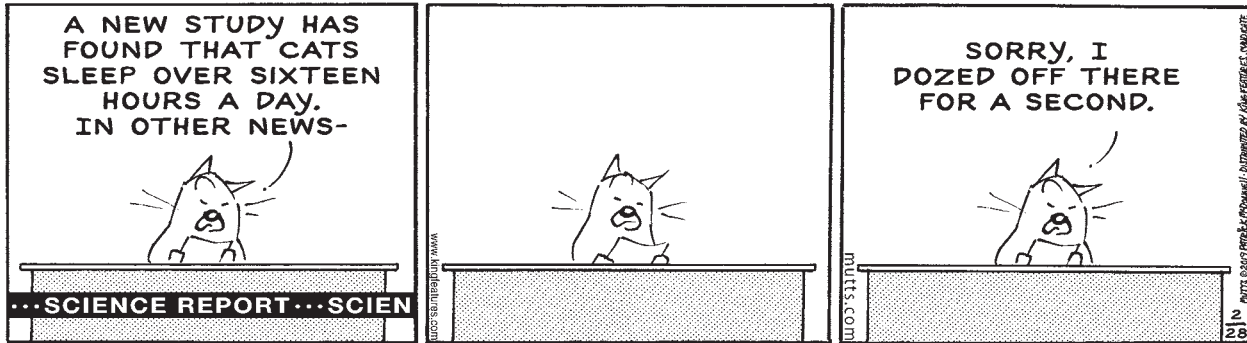
### OPTIONS FOR HEALTH CARE ACCESS

Expats may be able to qualify for a country's public health care system if they become residents. Otherwise, there's typically a private system in which people can pay out of pocket and get reimbursed if they have private health insurance. Peddicord and her husband, Lief Simon, who are in their 50s, have an international health insurance policy that covers them whether they're traveling or at home in France or Panama. The annual cost is about \$3,000 for both of them, she says. Murray, 69, says he and his wife pay about \$80 each month for Mexico's public health system, but use private doctors and pay out of pocket for most care (including \$8 for a recent hospital visit to treat an eye infection).

"My personal budget no longer contains a line for health care expenses," Murray says. "They are so inconsequential there is no need." □



## Mutts



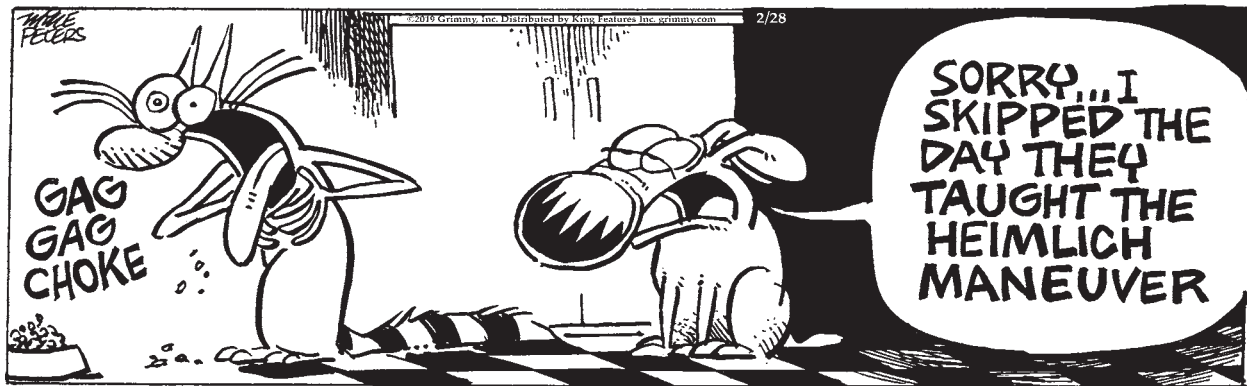
## 6 Chix



## Blondie



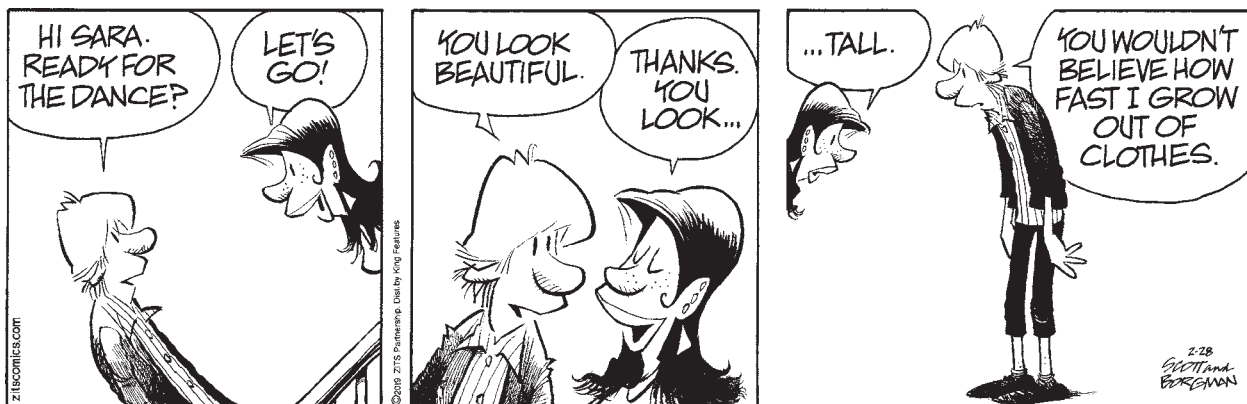
## Mother Goose & Grimm



## Baby Blues



## Zits



## Conceptis Sudoku

9				1				6
				7				
		3		8		9		
	7		6		9			
6	9		4		5		8	
			3		8		1	
		2		9		3		
			5					
8				2				1

Difficulty Level ★★★

2/28

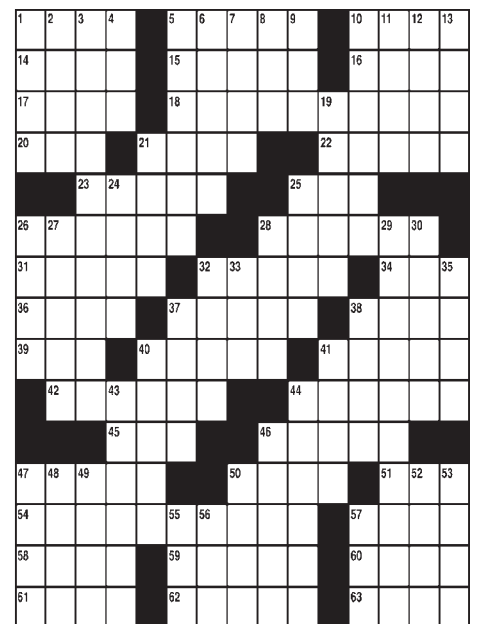
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

5	9	3	1	4	2	7	6	8
4	7	6	5	9	8	3	2	1
2	8	1	6	7	3	4	5	9
6	5	8	4	1	7	2	9	3
9	4	2	3	5	6	8	1	7
3	1	7	8	2	9	6	4	5
7	2	4	9	3	5	1	8	6
8	3	9	2	6	1	5	7	4
1	6	5	7	8	4	9	3	2

### ACROSS

- Commanded
- Bit of parsley
- Air pollution
- Lincoln & Vigoda
- Port-au-Prince's nation
- Make well
- Trawlers' needs
- Emphasize
- FDR, HST, JFK...
- Banyan or beech
- drop of a hat; speedily
- Hit the ; decline rapidly
- Reason to call in sick
- Spuds
- Magazine title
- Saying
- Laotian or Chinese
- Hearing organ
- BBQ favorites
- Exhausted
- Singer Patti
- Kraków's nation: abbr.
- Place for rouge
- Soldier's gun
- "...with a Kiss"; 1960s song
- Exhaled audibly
- Cruz or Shackelford
- Herder's rope
- Thespian
- Salary
- Fraternity letter
- Covering completely
- Look ; view
- Michigan or Ontario
- Twist or tango
- Lowly laborer
- "Bright "; Shirley Temple film
- Miles per hour
- Performing ; ballet, opera, etc.



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

2/28/19

### Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

SAPS	STAN	AJAR
ACRES	HADA	LOPE
SHEET	UNSULLIED	
SEA	OAT	SOUNDS
ROOTS	EAR	
STRIPE	SANEST	
HEALS	SCOTS	PEP
INNS	SHONE	MORE
NOG	SHOPS	TERRA
RESCUE	PRATES	
CAD	PEALS	
STRAND	OWN	PAN
COURTEOUS	CEASE	
ABLE	RUSE	EDGAR
TEES	STAR	SEND

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2/28/19

- Department store employee
- Shine's partner, in phrase
- Does penance
- Drooped
- Cyclist Armstrong
- Suffix for allow or agree
- Potter's need
- away; subtract
- Merlot or Riesling
- Hilarious person
- Hotels
- Sullivan & Ames
- Dance type
- "\_ Lazy River"

### DOWN

- Musical group
- Not up yet
- Loathsome



## Classifieds

## Halley Time Travel

## Divi Village

1 BR WK # 8 & 9  
21 & 25 weeks remain  
\$9000 each

## Divi links Golf

1 BR WK# 8 & 9  
27 weeks remain  
\$9000 each

## Eagle Resort &amp; Casino

1 BR WK # 5,6,7,8  
Ground floor \$7000 each  
1 BR WK 7 & 8 \$7000 each  
Dutch Village  
1 BR WK 8 \$8500  
24 weeks remain

## House For Sale

## Catiri

3 Bedroom , 2 Bath  
10 Min drive to beach  
Certral located \$250 K  
Ponton  
4 Bedroom , 3 Bath  
Swimming pool \$350K

## Marriott Ocean Club

Platinum  
1 BR Ocean View \$10,000  
2 BR Ocean View \$16,000  
2 BR Ocean Front \$24,000

## Barceló

2 BR dlx wk 9 and 10 \$40K  
both wks

## Aruba Divi Phoenix

2 BR Penthouse WK # 11 & 12  
Building 9 the 7th floor  
27 weeks remain \$25K each  
Property land for sale  
Savaneta on the main road  
1050 m2 \$110.000 american  
dollars

## Divi Links Golf

1 BR WK 11 & 12  
26 weeks remain each  
\$9000 each  
Studio Wk 11  
26 weeks remain \$8000

## House for sale

## Opal

3 bedroom , 2 bath \$ 325K

## Aruba Divi Phoenix

1 BR WK # 11  
Biulding 7 3rd floor  
34 weeks remain \$16K

## Marriott Surf Club

2 BR Garden Vie w \$14,000  
2 BR Ocean View \$ 15,000  
2 BR Ocean Side \$16,000  
2 BR Ocean Front \$ 27,000  
3 BR Ocean View \$26,000

## La Cabana Beach &amp; Casino

1 Br Wk # 11 & 12  
4th floor pool/Ocean view  
Sunday check in \$ 18, 000 both  
Divi Village  
Studio WK # 6  
22 weeks remain \$8000

## Renaissance Suites

1 BR WK # 9 \$9500  
4th Floor Harbor/Ocean View  
Aruba Divi Phoenix  
Studio wk # 9  
building 6  
5th floor \$9000  
30 weeks remain

## Aruba Divi Phoenix

1 BR Wk # 8  
Biulding # 6 on the 4th floor  
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# Ash loggers race against time before beetles get them all

By MICHAEL HILL

**WALTON, N.Y. (AP)** — Loggers in snowy forests are cutting down ash like there's no tomorrow, seeking to stay one step ahead of a fast-spreading beetle killing the tree in dozens of states.

The emerald ash borer has been chewing its way through trees from Maine to Colorado for about two decades, devastating a species prized for yielding a light-grained hardwood attractive enough for furniture and resilient enough for baseball bats. Many hard-hit areas are east of the Mississippi River and north of the Mason-Dixon Line. Some fear areas in the invasion zone like upstate New York might have only five to seven years of ash logging left.

"Emerald ash borer is probably the most thorough killing machine that we've come across in my career over the last 35 years," said Tom Gerow, general manager for The Wagner Companies, which specializes in furniture-grade lumber.

Wagner is sawing ash at its mills at about double the rate they used to. And out in the woods, there's often no reason to follow the common practice of leaving trees behind to regenerate the forest.

"When we're harvesting a stand that has ash in it and you know it's imminent that the ash borer is going to be there, we tend to cut all of the ash," Gerow said.

The beetle was first dis-



In this Feb. 7, 2019 photo, an ash log at The Wagner Companies' mill in Owego, N.Y. shows evidence that a larval emerald ash borer was active in the tree before it was cut.

Associated Press

covered stateside in 2002 in Michigan and has since destroyed tens of millions of ash trees in more than 30 states. It might have unwittingly been bought over from Asia in shipping pallets. No one knows for sure. But it's clear that the emerald ash borer kills almost every tree it attacks, from thick-canopied suburban shade trees to tall pockets of ash in the woods.

Females lay eggs on ash bark and larval beetles bore looping tunnels just beneath, cutting the flow of trees' nutrients and water. At the Wagner mill in Owego, New York, squig-

gly scars from a larval tunnel were partially exposed on a stacked log where the bark came off. The wood inside is still good for lumber, but the markings show the tree was on borrowed time.

Winter is a prime time for logging. The frozen ground and leaf-free trees can make it easier to get to and drag out the logs.

Ash trees being cut down by a crew recently on a snowy hillside in Walton, west of the Catskill Mountains, still looked good. The thick trees shot straight up for dozens of feet before branching out. One freshly

felled tree almost knee-high in diameter revealed a roughly 80-ring cross section that looked blonde and healthy.

Still, an ash tree usually takes several years to show obvious signs of deterioration. And Wagner head forester Eric LaClair noted that the emerald ash borer has already hit trees to the south and east.

"Realistically, when you look at this stand here, it could be here," LaClair said, looking at the towering trees. "We're just not seeing evidence of it."

Farther south, the situation is dire. In Maryland, hard-

wood exporter Mark Lipschitz said he can barely source ash anymore from the southern part of Pennsylvania and Maryland.

"I have a standing order with my sawmill guys," said Lipschitz, owner of Nina Co. "I just tell them: I will take every stick of ash that you can supply."

The decline has coincided with reduced demand for ash baseball bats as more sluggers are swinging with maple. But the beetle has been doing its work even as ash wood has caught on in China, which takes in more exported U.S. ash than any other country, according to the American Hardwood Export Council. Ash exports to China slowed last year amid trade tensions and higher tariffs, though the United States and China are working to reconcile their trade differences.

There are no signs that the emerald ash borer will stop spreading anytime soon, with even states in the Northwest on guard.

Some see ash following the fate of the American chestnut, a once-prolific tree that was decimated by blight more than a century ago. George Robinson, a University at Albany biology professor and a member of the state Invasive Species Advisory Committee, doesn't think the ash will be entirely wiped out. But they'll be greatly reduced.

"The hope," he said, "is by collecting seeds and some specimens there will be a future for the ash." □

# Experts report spike in harp seal strandings on East Coast

**PORTLAND, Maine (AP)** — Experts are trying to pinpoint the cause of a sharp increase in harp seal strandings along the East Coast.

Marine Mammals of Maine reports that it has responded to 63 reports of harp seal strandings so far this year, compared to six last year. Executive Director

Lynda Doughty said about a third of those seals were distressed or unhealthy.

The Portland Press Herald reports that biologists have not found evidence that the harp seals are suffering from the distemper virus that killed hundreds of harbor seals last year in New England.

Officials say the strandings are happening as far south as Virginia. People who encounter the seals are encouraged to give them space. □



In this March 30, 2008 file photo, a harp seal pauses after being released in Maine following treatment after being found stranded earlier in the year.



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# Lanvin makes a comeback at designer's debut show in Paris

By THOMAS ADAMSON

Associated Press

**PARIS (AP)** — After several years in the creative wilderness, Lanvin is back on form.

There was a palpable sense of relief — as well as praise — as noisy applause erupted at the end of the French couture house's catwalk show Wednesday, a debut from Bruno Sialelli, Lanvin's fourth designer in four years.

Some highlights from the fall and winter ready-to-wear shows at Paris Fashion Week:

## LANVIN IS BACK

Lanvin, a French national treasure, has struggled since the departure of lauded couturier Alber Elbaz in 2015 after 14 years at the helm.

That ended resoundingly Wednesday, with Sialelli taking the brand in a strong new direction with a playful, arty and accomplished collection of men's and women's designs called "Mystic Pilgrims."



A model wears a creation as part of the Mugler ready to wear Fall-Winter 2019-2020 collection, that was presented in Paris, Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019.

Associated Press

The collection was shown amid statues of French kings inside the haunting stone interiors of Paris' National Museum of the Middle Ages.

Layering was used whimsically. Fluid medieval fairy-

rytale princess silhouettes featured amid uber-small waists, deconstructed ponchos in Saville Row-style check, and tartan print used as a contrasting bodice on ethnic silk dresses.

Colors were used with mas-

tery — in a melting pot of Renaissance hues that spanned from the house's signature blue into what the brand called "powdery shades of avocado, absinthe, banana and bergamot warmed by ma-

hogany, navy, tomato and a blaze of ultraviolet."

Some had raised doubts about Sialelli when he was poached in January from Loewe, given that he was relatively unknown and only 31 years old. Others had taken to social media in recent seasons with the tag #JeSuisLanvin in sadness and solidarity at the great house's perceived demise.

This collection proved them wrong.

## MARGIELA'S DEGENERATION

Paris Fashion Week brims with new design concepts — some are pure gimmicks, others relevant fresh ideas. This season Maison Margiela's design chief John Galiano introduced fashion editors, under the lofty ceiling of the Grand Palais, to "degeneration."

The house markets itself as a sort of fashion ideas laboratory with staff that always don white science aprons. □

# Hanoi Postcard: Vietnamese painter of Trump art diversifies

By TRAN VAN MINH

Associated Press

**HANOI, Vietnam (AP)** — The stereotype of artists as eccentric is a common one, and the work of Vietnamese artist Tran Lam Binh seems to support that view. Since 2015 he has turned out painting after painting of Donald Trump. Many can be seen this week in Vietnam's capital, Hanoi, where Trump is holding a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Binh has also fashioned a statue of the American president that's almost 2 meters (6½ feet) tall, more or less life size.

Don't assume Binh is single-minded, however.

In 2017, he began diversifying his portfolio of roughly 50 depictions of Trump by painting portraits of Kim Jong Un as well.

So this week is kind of a perfect storm for 36-year-old Binh with his two favorite subjects coming to his homeland to discuss peace on the Korean Pen-



In this Feb. 25, 2019, photo, Tran Lam Binh puts the final touches to a portrait of U.S. President Donald Trump in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Associated Press

insula.

To mark the event, Binh has created about 10 pop-art portraits of Trump and Kim on canvas and paper in bright pink, blue, orange and yellow colors decorated with hearts and the

words "Love" and "Peace."

Binh said he won't sell the portraits and instead will keep them as a souvenir of the historic event. He may not be turning a profit, but has been reaping a motherlode of publicity as the

summit has brought foreign and local media in droves to see him and his work.

Binh started painting Trump portraits in 2015 when the American real estate mogul launched his campaign for the presidency. After

Trump's election victory, Binh staged an exhibition of his works on a sidewalk near the White House.

Binh's style, with garish colors and casual brush strokes, somewhat recalls the paintings of Canadian comedian Jim Carrey, another Trump obsessive.

Carrey's barbed caricatures, posted on the internet, make no secret of the fact that he is a fierce critic of Trump and his politics. Binh, on the other hand, is a fan.

"I liked his expression when he was running for president," Binh said. "He seemed like the world's most contemporary artwork. He's at a relatively advanced age, but very youthful, dynamic, fashionable and with inner strength that shows the greatness of a man who can change the world — and so I began my paintings."

Binh said he wants to invite Trump and Kim, "if they have time," to visit his studio and view his work. □



# Huppert adds class to stalker thriller 'Greta'

By LINDSEY BAHR  
Associated Press

Imagine you're a 20-something living in New York City and you spot a particularly nice and structured green leather handbag on the subway. Do you report it to the MTA? Ignore it and move on? Claim it and its contents for yourself? Return to the owner?

For Chloe Grace Moretz's Frances, a wide-eyed transplant to the big city, it's obvious: You go alone to hand-deliver the bag to Greta Hideg (Isabelle Huppert), who, according to the identification card you find, is a tiny, nice-looking woman in her 60s. This is the first of many mistakes Frances makes in writer and director Neil Jordan's ("The Crying Game," "Michael Collins") stylish and knowingly over-the-top "Greta," a dark, Brian De Palma-esque fairy tale about the dangers of trusting a lonely soul. She might just turn out to be a wolf, right?

The film starts out like a rom-com, introducing sweet Frances working in a fancy Manhattan restaurant and



This image released by Focus Features shows Isabelle Huppert in a scene from "Greta." Associated Press

riding the train alone back to the spacious apartment she shares with her roommate Erica (Maika Monroe), a wealthy party girl with more street savvy than dear Frances. Erica suggests they take the cash in the purse and use it for colonics. But Frances, who recently lost her own mother, wants to do what she con-

siders the right thing and before you know it, she and Greta are fast friends and it's nice for a while! They take walks in the city, have long talks about life over homemade meals and red wine, and even adopt a dog for Greta.

It's only when Frances stumbles on something that frightens her enough to

ghost Greta that things get bad.

Greta, a widow and mother to an estranged daughter, lives in one of those impossible old city houses that's been so built up around, it's almost hidden now. Inside is a cozy, but decaying mish-mash of elegant vintage wares — threadbare rugs, torn upholstery and black-

and-white photos in dusty silver frames that looks like it belongs to a 95-year-old, not a 65-year old. (My first thought was, "Is this Greta's mother's home?")

It's a not so subtle metaphor for the societal invisibility of the aging woman and a theme of this otherwise berserk but enjoyable film that I'm having trouble reconciling. First, because Huppert isn't nearly as old as the film seems to want her to be, and second because perhaps narratives further alienating older people by casting them as creepy and crazy outsiders are kind of evil. Is it because it's written by men (Ray Wright and Jordan are co-credited as the screenwriters)? It's possible considering how ridiculous and underdeveloped a character like Erica is.

But Huppert seems to be enjoying herself fully leaning into Greta's insanity, so perhaps this one can get a pass. She helps elevate the film from its self-consciously B-movie roots to be something that's actually pretty good. □

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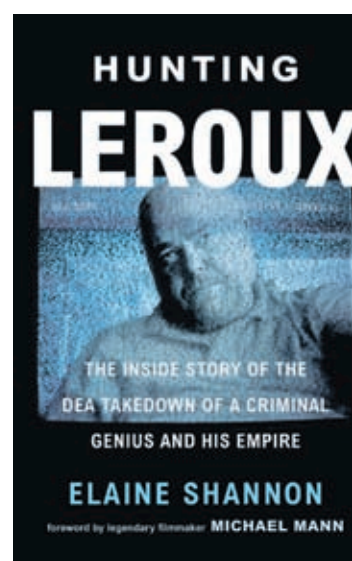
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## Takedown of Paul LeRoux is gripping true-crime tale



This cover image released by William Morrow shows "Hunting LeRoux: The Inside Story of the DEA Takedown of a Criminal Genius and His Empire," by Elaine Shannon.

Associated Press

By JEFF AYERS  
Associated Press

"Hunting LeRoux: The Inside Story of the DEA Takedown

of a Criminal Genius and His Empire" by Elaine Shannon (Morrow).

A master criminal and the step-by-step methods used to stop him permeate this gripping account that is both well-written and exhaustively researched by Elaine Shannon.

Paul LeRoux was a ruthless killer who took the traditional methods of organized crime and mixed them with modern technology. His team of mercenaries were ex-military men who murdered his enemies without hesitation or remorse. With so many layers to his enterprise, LeRoux was able to stay hidden in the shadows while he raked in the money and others did his dirty work.

A few elite Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agents saw a pattern, and

uncovered the truth. They realized that with all of LeRoux's worldwide resources in technology, drugs, weapons and people, it would not be easy to take him out.

These agents worked for a division called the 960 Group, essentially the elite of the elite. They hatched a bold plan to infiltrate LeRoux's operation by using the same methods that had given their target so much success: a combination of modern technology and men willing to risk their lives undercover.

What follows is a gripping true-crime tale that is both unbelievable while yet being realistic. Investigative journalist Shannon takes the reader beyond the fly-on-the-wall and puts them right into the heart of every action and situation. □



# Jimmie Allen is a reflection of a new country music world

By KRISTIN M. HALL

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) —

Country singer Jimmie Allen likes to tell a story about the first time he met songwriter J.P. Williams, who is blind, before they came up with Allen's No. 1 hit single "Best Shot."

"I said, 'I don't know if anyone told you, but I'm black,'" Allen said. "So keep the black jokes to a minimum."

Allen, who made history last year for being the first black artist to launch his career with a No. 1 single on the Billboard Country Airplay chart, isn't afraid of joking about the elephant in the room: He's usually the only black man in the country song writers' room. He and artists like Kane Brown, 25, who is biracial,

are appealing to millennial and Gen Z listeners who aren't traditional country fans but are discovering country music in different platforms, such as streaming, YouTube and social media. That has allowed these black artists to succeed in a predominantly white musical landscape.

"The folks that listen to Kane Brown and the folks that have started to listen to Jimmie Allen, many of them would not call themselves country fans," said Nadine Hubbs, professor of women's studies and music at the University of Michigan and the author



In this Jan. 22, 2019, photo, country singer Jimmie Allen poses in Nashville, Tenn. Allen is the first black artist to launch his career with a No. 1 single on the Billboard Country Airplay chart.

Associated Press

of "Rednecks, Queens and Country Music."

Certainly, there's not a sea change, but there is incremental change even as the genre is shrinking its gender diversity. Last year, three artists who are minorities, Allen, Brown and Darius Rucker, scored No. 1 country airplay hits, which is only slightly less than the four female artists who reached the top spot with their own songs or as a duet partner. Both Brown and Allen are skilled at reaching new audiences through social media, with Brown even scoring a record deal because of his country covers

on Facebook. Allen, who has the charisma of a seasoned TV pro, posts a lot of pictures on Instagram of his adorable 4-year-old son or his trips to Disney World.

Brown has had a lot of crossover opportunities, singing with artists like Camila Cabello and Khalid, while Allen, who is newer to the genre and has had less collaborations, has pop and rock influences in his music. But both still hold tightly to their country roots and their country vocals and they are well-versed in country music history, Hubbs said. Like Charley Pride and Rucker, Allen sings about

traditional country music themes of small towns, rural life, love and romance and the simple pleasures of life. At the same time, both Allen and Brown aren't afraid to address race in their songs, which previously generations of black country artists weren't always able to do.

On his 2018 debut record on Stoney Creek called "Mercury Lane," Allen co-wrote a song called "All Tractors Ain't Green," directly challenging stereotypes about being black, being rural and being able to sing about those things even though he's not a

white man from the South.

"People always used to say, 'You can grow up and be anything you want. You can be president,'" Allen said. "But until Obama became president, you couldn't really tell a black kid that you could be president because there wasn't one. So I feel like representation is very important."

For generations, the African-American contribution to country music has been largely underappreciated, despite the fact that black musicians have been intrinsic to the genre's origins and development. But Hubbs said there is more scholarship about country music like "Hidden in the Mix: The African American Presence in Country Music," by Diane Pecknold and more artists like Rhiannon Giddens who are bringing attention to black American folk music. Hubbs said greater knowledge about race and country music trickles down into popular culture.

Pride is the subject of a recent PBS "American Masters" special detailing his upbringing out of segregation to become CMA entertainer of the year. And both the Grand Ole Opry and the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum have honored Ray Charles in recent months for opening many people's eyes to what was previously considered white hillbilly music. Charles' classic 1962 record, "Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music," was also finally released this month on streaming services, hopefully to bring in a new generation of listeners to his country records.

"Right now folks on social media, the younger generation of music lovers are getting the memo that country music was never so-called pure white music," Hubbs said.

Jon Loba, the executive vice president of BBR Music Group, which has top artists like Jason Aldean, as well as rising stars like Lindsay Ell and Dustin Lynch, didn't really consider signing Allen as a riskier choice than any other new artist. □

## Encore run of 'A Star Is Born' features more footage, songs



Lady Gaga, left, and Bradley Cooper perform "Shallow" from "A Star Is Born" at the Oscars on Sunday, Feb. 24, 2019, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Can't stop watching Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper's Oscar-night performance of "Shallow"? You're in luck: Warner Bros. is bringing a special encore version of "A Star Is Born" back to the big screen Friday with nearly 12 additional minutes of footage.

The studio said Wednesday that the new edition will feature extended performances of songs sung by Gaga like "Alibi," and an a cappella "Shallow," which won the Oscar Sunday for best original song. It will also feature brand new scenes between the two leads Ally and Jack.

The one week engagement starts Friday on over 1,150 screens in the U.S. and Canada. □



# Israeli startups join firms making lab-grown 'clean meat'

By ILAN BEN ZION

Associated Press

NES ZIONA, Israel (AP) —

Several Israeli start-ups have joined a handful of companies around the globe trying to develop lab-grown meat, something they see as a solution to the needs of the world's ever-growing population and burgeoning demand for food.

The product has been known under different names, including cultured meat, in-vitro or artificial and "clean meat" — a term advocates say underscores its environment-friendly nature. It's basically made of animal muscle cells grown in a culture in a lab, a technology similar to stem cells. And while "synthetic steaks" are perhaps not a candidate for everyone's favorite dish, they could someday compete with conventional chicken or beef, an affordable price tag permitting.

"Producing meat is very inefficient," said Yaakov Nahmias, a bioengineering professor at Hebrew University and founder of Future Meat Technologies. Cultured meat, by comparison, consumes "10 times less water, less land, less energy than the current meat production."

Advocates say lab-grown meat is flavorful and better for the environment than conventional meat. They say it consumes less water, energy and land, produces less greenhouse gases and reduces animal suffering. Agriculture is estimated to



This Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019 photo, shows a lab-grown steak during a presentation by the Israeli company Aleph Farms, in Jaffa, Israel.

generate around 13 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, with livestock alone responsible for two-thirds of those emissions, according to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization.

For Israel, the advances are a far cry from the country's early decades, when meat was rationed.

In fact, Israel is quickly becoming "the leader in the space, or (is) side-by-side with Silicon Valley" in cultured meat technologies, said Alex Shirazi, co-founder of the Cultured Meat and Future Food podcast and a founder of the Cultured Meat Symposium, an industry gathering in San Francisco in November.

Israel has a thriving high-tech scene, so the pursuit

of lab-grown meat was a natural avenue for its entrepreneurs, experts say. The government's Innovation Authority has also sought to stimulate food-technology companies through grants and the financing of a \$25 million food-tech incubator.

Israel currently imports much of its meat and the government is invested in creating food security. For observant Jews, several prominent Orthodox rabbis have already expressed approval for lab-grown meat being kosher. Because it doesn't come from a slaughtered animal, some rabbis have even said cultured meat could be consumed as a cheeseburger — a combination of meat and milk otherwise forbidden in Jewish tradition.

In February, the Good Food Institute, a Washington-based non-profit promoting the development of meat alternatives, announced a series of research grants "for the benefit of the entire scientific community and good food industry."

One of the six \$250,000 grants for "clean meat" researchers went to Israel, and a second Israeli researcher received funds for "plant-based" meat alternatives.

"Israel is a fertile ground for tech in general and specifi-

cally for what we call alternative protein," said Beni Nofech, a board member at the institute. "Israel is such an innovation-driven economy and infrastructure, both governmental and private, is already in place to actually catalyze innovation and research." The industry still faces some significant hurdles, including astronomical cost, developmental challenges, regulatory issues and questions about whether people are ready to eat lab-grown meat.

Until now, most companies involved in the effort have only managed to produce fleshy granules.

Future Meat Technologies, a company based out of

Jerusalem's Hebrew University, and SuperMeat are among those combining animal cells and plant proteins as a potential alternative to processed meats.

Aleph Farms, an Israeli start-up launched in 2017, announced in December it succeeded in producing a lab-grown "minute steak" made from bovine cells that closely resembles the texture and flavor of its cow-borne counterpart.

For now, the tiny steaks are just 3 millimeters (a tenth of an inch) wide — roughly the size of a very thin strip of roast beef.

Each Israeli player has raised several million dollars in early investment, including from major food manufacturers such as U.S. giant Tyson Foods, Germany's PHW Group, and Israel's Strauss Group.

The first lab-grown burger was made by a Dutch company in 2013 at a cost of over \$300,000. Production costs have fallen in the years since. Last year, U.S.-based Memphis Meats' ground beef alternative was reported to cost about \$2,400 per pound. Each slice of Aleph Farms' "steak" costs about \$50 to produce. Before it can hit the shelves, lab-grown meat will face regulatory obstacles. The U.S. government's FDA and USDA announced in November they would "jointly oversee the production of cell-cultured food products derived from livestock and poultry." □



In this Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019 photo, chef Amir Ilan prepares a lab-grown steak during a presentation by the Israeli company Aleph Farms, in Jaffa, Israel.

Associated Press



This Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019 photo, shows a first lab-grown steak during a presentation by the Israeli company Aleph Farms, in Jaffa, Israel.

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